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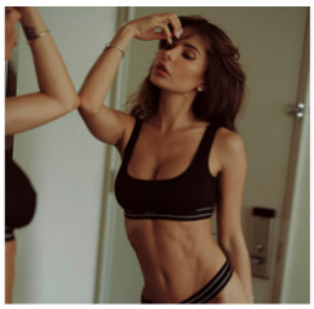

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DECENTRALIZED * PEER
BITCOIN * CURRENCY

THE 5 BIGGEST CRYPTO CURRENCIES

& How to Purchase Them

Crypto currencies have taken the financial world by storm, transforming the way we think about money, investments, and even the future of commerce. As digital currencies continue to gain popularity, more people are becoming interested in exploring this new frontier of finance. Among the thousands of crypto currencies available, a few have risen to the top, becoming household names and attracting significant attention from investors and enthusiasts alike.

In this article, we'll dive deep into five of the biggest crypto currencies in the world: Bitcoin, Ethereum, Binance Coin, Ripple (XRP), and Cardano. We'll explore what makes each of these digital assets unique, their key features, and their role in the broader crypto currency ecosystem. Additionally, we'll guide you through the process of purchasing these crypto currencies, offering practical tips and advice to help you navigate the world of digital finance with confidence. Whether you're a seasoned investor or a newcomer to the crypto space, this guide will provide you with the insights you need to make informed decisions and participate in the exciting world of crypto currencies.

1 Bitcoin (BTC)

Bitcoin, the first and most well-known crypto currency, was created in 2009 by an anonymous person or group of people using the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. Often referred to as "digital gold," Bitcoin has become the benchmark for the entire crypto currency market, with its value and market dominance influencing the price trends of other crypto currencies. Bitcoin's decentralized nature, limited supply (capped at 21 million coins), and its use as a store of value have made it a popular choice for investors looking to hedge against inflation and financial instability.

Key Features

• *Decentralization:* Bitcoin operates on a decentralized network of computers (nodes) that validate transactions without the need for a central authority.

• *Limited Supply:* With a maximum supply of 21 million coins, Bitcoin's scarcity is a key factor in its value proposition.

• *Security:* Bitcoin transactions are secured by a process called mining, which uses cryptographic techniques to verify and record transactions on a public ledger known as the blockchain.

How to Purchase Bitcoin

Purchasing Bitcoin is relatively straightforward, with several methods available depending on your location and preferences:

1. Cryptocurrency Exchanges

• Platforms like Coinbase, Binance, and Kraken offer easy access to Bitcoin. Simply create an account, complete the necessary identity verification, and deposit funds using a bank transfer, credit card, or other payment methods. Once your account is funded, you can buy Bitcoin directly on the exchange.

2. Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Platforms

• P2P platforms like LocalBitcoins or Paxful allow you to buy Bitcoin directly from other individuals. These platforms often offer more payment options, including PayPal, gift cards, and cash deposits.

3. Bitcoin ATMs

• Bitcoin ATMs are becoming increasingly common in major cities around the world. These machines allow you to purchase Bitcoin using cash or a debit card. After the transaction, the Bitcoin is sent directly to your digital wallet.

4. PayPal and Cash App

• PayPal and Cash App have integrated Bitcoin purchases into their platforms, making it easy for users to buy and sell Bitcoin directly from their accounts.

5. Custodial Services

• For those who prefer a more hands-off approach, custodial services like Grayscale offer investment products that hold Bitcoin on your behalf, allowing you to gain exposure to Bitcoin without directly purchasing and managing the cryptocurrency.

2 Ethereum (ETH)

Ethereum, launched in 2015 by Vitalik Buterin, is a decentralized platform that enables developers to build and deploy smart contracts and decentralized applications (DApps). Unlike Bitcoin, which primarily serves as a digital currency, Ethereum is designed to be a programmable blockchain, offering a platform for decentralized finance (DeFi), non-fungible tokens (NFTs), and more. Ethereum's native cryptocurrency, Ether (ETH), is used to power transactions and computational services on the network.

Key Features

• *Smart Contracts:* Ethereum allows developers to create and execute smart contracts—self-executing contracts with the terms of the agreement directly written into code.

• *Decentralized Applications (DApps):* Ethereum serves as a foundation for thousands of DApps, ranging from decentralized finance platforms to gaming and social networks.

• *Ethereum 2.0:* Ethereum is transitioning to Ethereum 2.0, an upgrade aimed at improving scalability, security, and sustainability by shifting from a proof-of-work (PoW) to a proof-of-stake (PoS) consensus mechanism.

How to Purchase Ethereum

Like Bitcoin, purchasing Ethereum is a straightforward process, and there are several methods to choose from:

1. Cryptocurrency Exchanges

• Most major exchanges, including Coinbase, Binance, and Kraken, offer Ethereum alongside Bitcoin. After creating an account and completing verification, you can deposit funds and purchase Ether using fiat currency or another cryptocurrency.

2. Decentralized Exchanges (DEXs)

• DEXs like Uniswap or SushiSwap allow you to trade directly from your wallet without the need for a centralized intermediary. You can swap other cryptocurrencies for Ethereum on these platforms, though you'll need an Ethereum-compatible wallet and some Ether to cover gas fees.

3. Ethereum ATMs

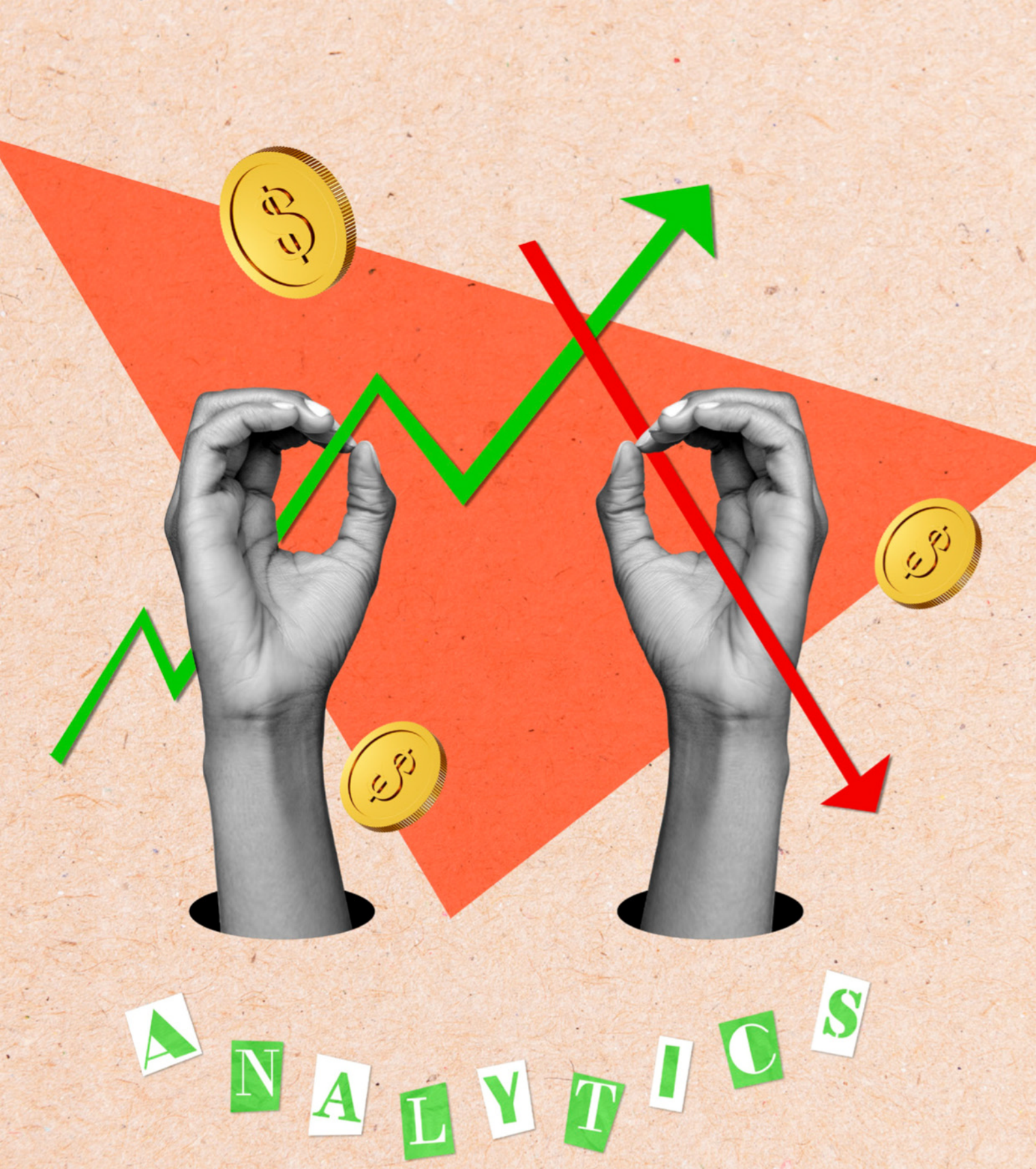
• Similar to Bitcoin ATMs, Ethereum ATMs allow you to purchase Ether using cash or debit cards. These ATMs are less common than Bitcoin ATMs but are available in some locations.

4. PayPal and Cash App

• PayPal and Cash App users can also buy and sell Ethereum directly through their accounts, providing a convenient option for those already using these platforms.

5. Staking Platforms

• With the transition to Ethereum 2.0, staking platforms have become popular. These platforms allow you to stake your Ether and earn rewards while participating in the network's consensus mechanism. Some exchanges, like Binance and Kraken, offer staking services directly, making it easy to purchase and stake Ether in one place.


ANALYTICS

3
Binance Coin (BNB)

Binance Coin (BNB) was initially launched in 2017 as a utility token for the Binance cryptocurrency exchange. It was created on the Ethereum blockchain but later migrated to Binance's own blockchain, Binance Chain. BNB is used to pay for transaction fees on the Binance exchange, participate in token sales on Binance Launchpad, and more. Over time, BNB has grown beyond its original use case, becoming a significant player in the broader cryptocurrency ecosystem, including decentralized finance (DeFi) and NFTs.

Key Features

• *Utility Token:* BNB is primarily used to pay for trading fees on the Binance exchange, often at a discounted rate.
• *Binance Smart Chain (BSC):* BNB is the native token of Binance Smart Chain, a blockchain designed for fast and low-cost transactions. BSC is compatible with the Ethereum Virtual Machine (EVM), making it popular for DeFi applications and NFTs.
• *Burn Mechanism:* Binance regularly burns (destroys) a portion of BNB tokens to reduce the total supply, potentially increasing the value of the remaining tokens over time.

How to Purchase Binance Coin

BNB can be purchased through a variety of methods, most of which are integrated with the Binance ecosystem:

1. Binance Exchange

• The easiest way to purchase BNB is through the Binance exchange. After registering and verifying your account, you can deposit funds via bank transfer, credit card, or other crypto currencies. Once your account is funded, you can buy BNB directly.

2. Other Cryptocurrency Exchanges

• While Binance is the primary platform for purchasing BNB, other exchanges like Coinbase, Kraken, and Huobi also offer BNB trading pairs. The process of buying BNB on these platforms is similar to purchasing other cryptocurrencies.

3. Decentralized Exchanges (DEXs)

• BNB can also be purchased on decentralized exchanges that support Binance Smart Chain, such as PancakeSwap. To use a DEX, you'll need a BSC-compatible wallet like MetaMask or Trust Wallet, and some BNB to cover transaction fees.

4. Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Platforms

• Binance also offers a P2P platform where you can buy BNB directly from other users. This method often provides more payment options, including local bank transfers and various e-wallets.

5. Binance Earn and Savings Products

• If you're already a Binance user, you can also earn BNB through various savings and staking products offered on the platform. These products allow you to earn interest or rewards in BNB, which can be reinvested or held for future growth.

4
Ripple (XRP)

Ripple (XRP) is both a cryptocurrency and a digital payment protocol that was launched in 2012. Unlike most other cryptocurrencies, Ripple is not designed to function as a decentralized digital currency. Instead, it aims to facilitate fast, low-cost international money transfers. XRP, the native cryptocurrency of the Ripple network, is used as a bridge currency in cross-border transactions and helps to provide liquidity in the Ripple network.

Key Features

• Payment Protocol: Ripple's primary use case is to facilitate cross-border payments between financial institutions. Its protocol allows for near-instantaneous transfers with minimal fees.
• *Liquidity Provider:* XRP acts as a bridge currency, providing liquidity for transactions between different fiat currencies.
• *Centralized Control:* Unlike most cryptocurrencies, Ripple Labs controls a significant portion of XRP's supply, leading to ongoing debates about its decentralization.

How to Purchase Ripple (XRP)

XRP can be purchased through various methods, with its availability on most major exchanges:

1. Cryptocurrency Exchanges

• XRP is widely available on exchanges like Binance, Coinbase, and Kraken. After creating an account and completing verification, you can deposit funds and purchase XRP directly.

2. Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Platforms

• P2P platforms that support XRP allow you to buy the cryptocurrency directly from other users. This method often provides more flexibility in payment options, including local bank transfers

and e-wallets.

3. Ripple's Liquidity Solutions

• For institutions or high-volume traders, Ripple's On-Demand Liquidity (ODL) solution allows for the purchase of XRP as part of a broader cross-border payment strategy. This option is typically used by banks and financial institutions rather than individual investors.

4. Decentralized Exchanges (DEXs)

• While less common, some DEXs may offer XRP trading pairs. To use a DEX, you'll need a compatible wallet and some Ether or another cryptocurrency to swap for XRP.

5. Custodial Services

• Custodial platforms like Grayscale or other investment products offer exposure to XRP without the need to directly purchase and manage the cryptocurrency. This option is popular among investors looking for a more passive approach.

5 Cardano (ADA)

Cardano (ADA) is a blockchain platform that was launched in 2017 by Charles Hoskinson, one of the co-founders of Ethereum. Cardano aims to create a more secure and scalable blockchain platform for the development of decentralized applications (DApps) and smart contracts. What sets Cardano apart is its commitment to academic research and peer-reviewed development, ensuring that its protocols are built on a foundation of scientific rigor.

Key Features

• *Proof-of-Stake (PoS) Consensus:* Cardano uses a PoS consensus mechanism called Ouroboros, which is designed to be energy-efficient and secure.

• *Layered Architecture:* Cardano's blockchain is divided into two layers—the Cardano Settlement Layer (CSL) for ADA transactions and the Cardano Computation Layer (CCL) for smart contracts and DApps.

• *Research-Driven Development:* Cardano is known for its methodical approach, relying on academic research and peer-reviewed protocols to guide its development.

How to Purchase Cardano

Cardano (ADA) can be purchased through a variety of methods, similar to other major cryptocurrencies:

1. Cryptocurrency Exchanges

• ADA is widely available on exchanges like Binance, Coinbase, and Kraken.

After creating an account and completing verification, you can deposit funds and purchase ADA directly.

2. Decentralized Exchanges (DEXs)

• ADA can be traded on decentralized exchanges that support the Cardano network, though these are less common than Ethereum-based DEXs. You'll need a Cardano-compatible wallet to participate in DEX trading.

3. Staking Platforms

• Cardano's PoS consensus mechanism allows ADA holders to stake their coins and earn rewards. Many exchanges and wallets offer staking services, allowing you to purchase and stake ADA in one place.

4. Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Platforms

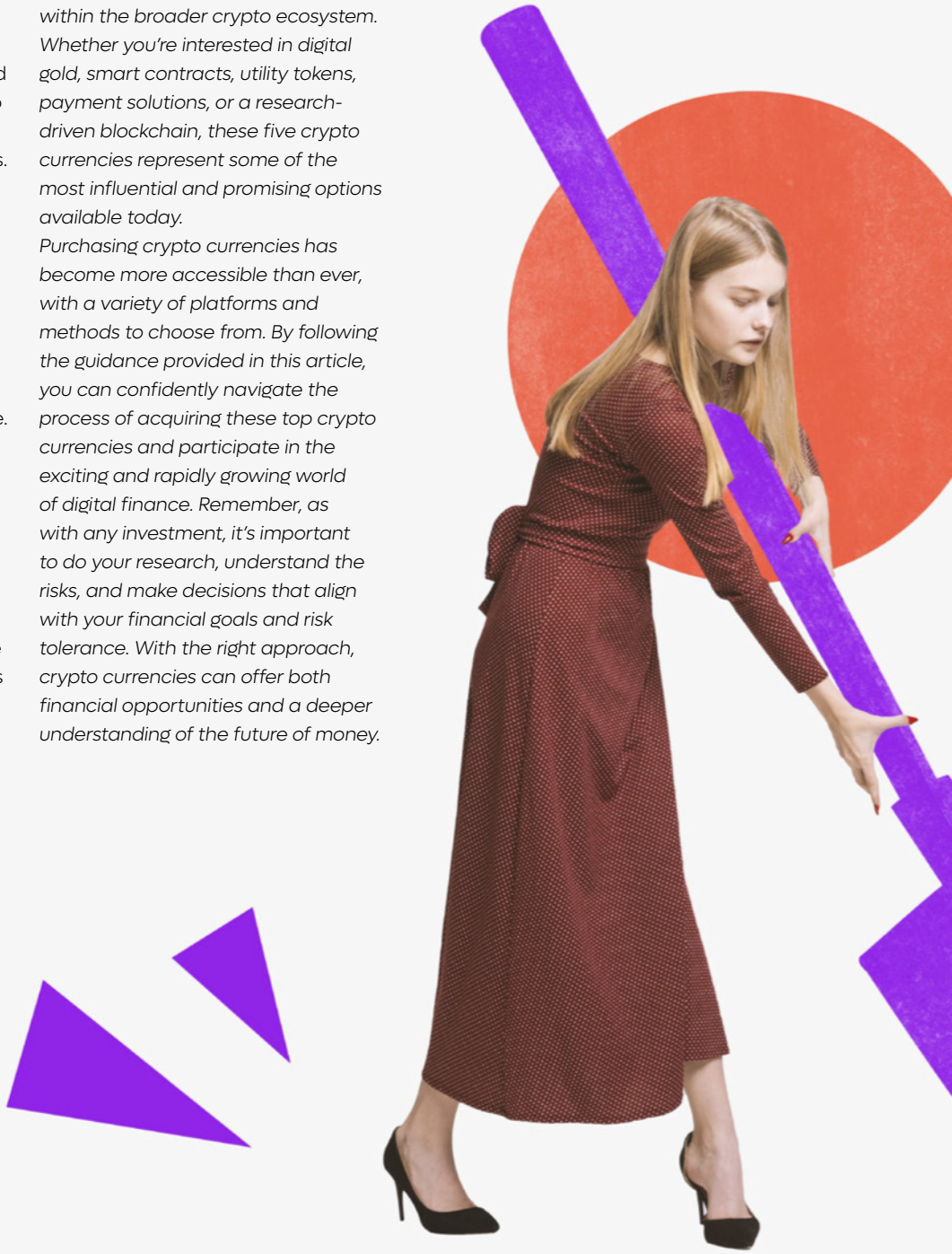
• P2P platforms that support ADA allow you to buy the cryptocurrency directly from other users, often with more payment options than traditional exchanges.

5. Custodial Services

• For those who prefer not to manage their ADA directly, custodial platforms offer investment products that hold ADA on your behalf, providing exposure to the cryptocurrency without the need to purchase and store it yourself.

As the world of crypto currencies continues to evolve, understanding the unique characteristics and potential of the top digital assets is essential for making informed investment decisions. Bitcoin, Ethereum, Binance Coin, Ripple, and Cardano each offer distinct features and opportunities, catering to different needs and preferences within the broader crypto ecosystem. Whether you're interested in digital gold, smart contracts, utility tokens, payment solutions, or a research-driven blockchain, these five crypto currencies represent some of the most influential and promising options available today.

Purchasing crypto currencies has become more accessible than ever, with a variety of platforms and methods to choose from. By following the guidance provided in this article, you can confidently navigate the process of acquiring these top crypto currencies and participate in the exciting and rapidly growing world of digital finance. Remember, as with any investment, it's important to do your research, understand the risks, and make decisions that align with your financial goals and risk tolerance. With the right approach, crypto currencies can offer both financial opportunities and a deeper understanding of the future of money.



ELEGANCE
Katerina Katz
IG @katarinakatz
Photographer LAVINA | @lavina.s

We're happy to have you featured on FHM. Can you give us a bit of a background on your career as a model and where it all started? I have always been interested in fashion and modeling, probably since childhood. However, I started taking it more seriously when I moved to New York from Miami in 2015. I've worked with different agencies, but being an independent model is the best fit for me now.

What helps you decompress and relax? I have many ways to unwind. I love nature, so spending time at the beach or hiking makes me feel better and more relaxed. A spa day is always a good idea. I enjoy massages, facials, and similar treatments. Meeting up with good friends for lunch or dinner, enjoying delicious food, and maybe doing some shopping afterward always lifts my spirits. I absolutely love to travel; it helps me break away from my routine and recharge with the energy of new places.

How romantic are you? I'm a very realistic person, but when I fall in love, I can be quite romantic and enjoy surprising my partner in different ways.

Having a full schedule must make it difficult for you to get much alone time, talk to us about the top 3 must-dos to ensure you fit in some well-deserved downtime: I really love reading books or watching interesting, thought-provoking movies; it totally helps me relax and recharge during my busy schedule. I also have a home beauty routine that I enjoy, including various masks and other care for my skin and hair, which helps me unwind in many ways. And then there's the gym and sports activities whenever I get the chance, I visit the gym or practice golf or tennis. Sports give me that extra boost of energy to achieve my goals in life.

What does it mean for you to be seen as a strong, intelligent, ambitious woman? For me, being seen as a strong, intelligent, and ambitious woman means embodying a complete and balanced approach to life. It involves investing in your health through a healthy lifestyle, regular workouts, and good habits. It also means continuously investing in your education, learning new things, and creating ideas and projects that can generate more income. Additionally, it's about helping others when they need it, being kind, and engaging in charity work. All these aspects contribute to being a well-rounded, empowered individual.

What are some of the biggest misconceptions people have about what you do? One of the biggest misconceptions people have about what I do is that they think much of what I have in life is due to luck. While I do believe in good luck and karma, I can't agree with that perception. I believe that everything is in our hands. We create our future through the decisions we make every day, by expanding our knowledge, and by working diligently toward our goals.

What does freedom of self-expression mean to you? Freedom of self-expression means always doing what you truly want to do, being in relationships or friendships with people you genuinely care about, and enjoying the hobbies that bring you joy. It's about following your heart and soul without regrets or fears. What others think doesn't matter; what matters is how you live your life and whether you find happiness. Worrying about others' opinions is one of the most useless things you can do to yourself.

Who are some of the models or influencers that you admire and draw inspiration from in your career? I really admire models from the '90s, they inspire me a lot. The natural beauty they had is something rare nowadays. My role models include Cindy Crawford, Heidi Klum, Naomi Campbell, and others. They aren't just beautiful; they are also incredibly smart women who are involved in many charity projects and other initiatives that benefit society. They have successful businesses and positively influence their audience. This combination of beauty, intelligence, and kindness makes them even more attractive to me.

We absolutely love your Instagram, your content is very dynamic, inspirational, and downright sexy, could you perhaps tell us what your personal experience as an influencer has been like? Thank you so much! Many people think being a model influencer is easy, but I can't agree with that. It takes a lot of time to promote your content, invest money in marketing, and constantly be creative for your followers. I can say it's a full-time job, but it's one that brings a good income.

Do you have any hidden talents, if so what is it? Not many people know, but I'm quite spiritual and love helping others in various ways. I have knowledge in astrology, numerology, psychology, and nutrition, and I offer private consultations, mainly life coaching for women. I provide guidance on how to become a better version of oneself and achieve personal goals. Additionally, I play golf very well. It might be an unusual hobby for a woman, but I truly enjoy it.

What is your favorite body part on you? on him? on her? I love and accept myself completely, with all my strengths and weaknesses. I feel the same way about my partner. However, I would say that the sexiest part of a man is his brain I'm really attracted to smart and intellectual people.

If you could eat just one food for the rest of your life, what would it be and why? I hope I never have to choose just one food to eat for the rest of my life because I love variety in my diet! However, if I had to choose, it would probably be oysters. They're a great source of protein and microelements,

and they're also considered an aphrodisiac.

Do you have any regrets in life? I have zero regrets. I view any negative situation as a lesson from the Universe, an opportunity to change my life for the better.

Thanks so much for your time, Where can our readers follow you on social to stay updated on what you're up to? The best way to follow me or reach out for business and advertising opportunities is through my Instagram at @katarinakatz.

THE ULTIMATE PRESCRIPTION FOR A FULFILLING LIFE!

Relocate to Costa del Sol

By Dr. Frank Hamre

As a medical professional, I have dedicated my career to understanding and improving the quality of life for my patients. Over the years, I have come to realize that the environment we choose to live in plays a crucial role in our overall well-being. For those of us in high-stress professions such as medicine, law, and cryptocurrency, among others, finding a haven that offers both professional opportunities and personal fulfillment is crucial. Allow me to introduce you, therefore, to the Costa del Sol, a gem on Spain's southern coast that promises not just a change of scenery, but a transformation in your lifestyle.

A Sanctuary for Medical Professionals

The Costa del Sol, with its stunning Mediterranean coastline, offers a serene escape from the relentless pace of hospital rounds and emergency calls. The region is home to several high-quality private and public healthcare facilities, making it an ideal place for doctors to continue their practice while enjoying a better work-life balance. The Spanish healthcare system is renowned for its excellence, and working here allows you to be part of a progressive medical community.

In Málaga, for example, the Costa del Sol's vibrant heart, the healthcare infrastructure is particularly robust, having seen a real boom in the past few years, with numerous hospitals and clinics offering advanced medical services. The city's rich history and cultural heritage provide a perfect backdrop for a balanced life. Imagine finishing your shift and heading straight to the beach for a swim, (which is what I do), or enjoying a leisurely dinner with friends at a local seaside "chiringuito."

An Oasis for Legal Minds

Lawyers can also benefit greatly from this change of scenery, as the Costa del Sol offers them a unique blend of tranquility and opportunity. The region is a hotspot for expatriates and international businesses, providing ample opportunities for legal professionals specializing in international law, real estate, and business law. The demand for legal expertise in these areas is growing, and the competitive yet relaxed environment allows for professional growth without the cutthroat pressures often associated with major financial centers, such as New York, London or Tokyo.

Marbella is particularly attractive in this regard for legal professionals, given its status as a playground for the wealthy and famous. The city is home to numerous luxury estates, international businesses, and a bustling expat community, creating a constant demand for legal services. Living in Marbella means you can swap the concrete jungle for picturesque white-washed villages, and the cacophony of city life for the gentle lapping of waves. The area's vibrant expat community and the high standard of living make it easy to network and build a client base, all while enjoying a lifestyle that includes golfing in the morning and attending cultural festivals in the evening.

A Paradise for Crypto Enthusiasts

Cryptocurrency experts will find Costa del Sol a compelling choice for relocation as well. Spain has been progressive in its approach to digital currencies and blockchain technology, with a growing number of businesses accepting cryptocurrencies and the government showing interest in developing a regulatory framework that fosters innovation while ensuring security.

Fuengirola, with its modern amenities and tech-friendly environment, is emerging as a hub for tech entrepreneurs and crypto enthusiasts. The city's burgeoning tech ecosystem, complete with numerous co-working spaces and tech hubs, provides the perfect environment for networking with like-minded professionals, brainstorming new ideas, and even launching startup ventures. The region's favorable tax policies for non-residents also make it an attractive base for crypto investors and entrepreneurs.

The Allure of Lifestyle and Leisure

Beyond professional opportunities, the Spanish Costa del Sol is synonymous with an enviable lifestyle. The region boasts over 320 days of sunshine a year, making outdoor activities a year-round possibility. Whether it's sailing, golfing, hiking in the Sierra Nevada mountains, or simply enjoying the pristine beaches, there is something for everyone.

Torremolinos offers a vibrant nightlife and a plethora of dining options, perfect for unwinding after a long day. Its proximity to Málaga ensures that you have easy access to urban amenities while enjoying the laid-back coastal vibe. The cultural richness of the area is another highlight. From the historic Alhambra in Granada to the Picasso Museum in Málaga, the region is steeped in history and art. The local festivals, flamenco shows, and vibrant nightlife ensure that there's never a dull moment.

For families, Costa del Sol offers excellent international schools and a safe, welcoming environment for children to grow up in. The blend of high-quality education, outdoor activities, and cultural experiences creates a nurturing setting for raising well-rounded children.

Making the Move

Relocating to Costa del Sol is not just a change of address; it's a step towards a more balanced, fulfilling life. As a doctor, I've seen first-hand the toll that stress and burnout can take on high-achieving professionals. Moving to a place where the air is cleaner, the food is healthier, and the pace of life is slower can do wonders for your mental and physical health.

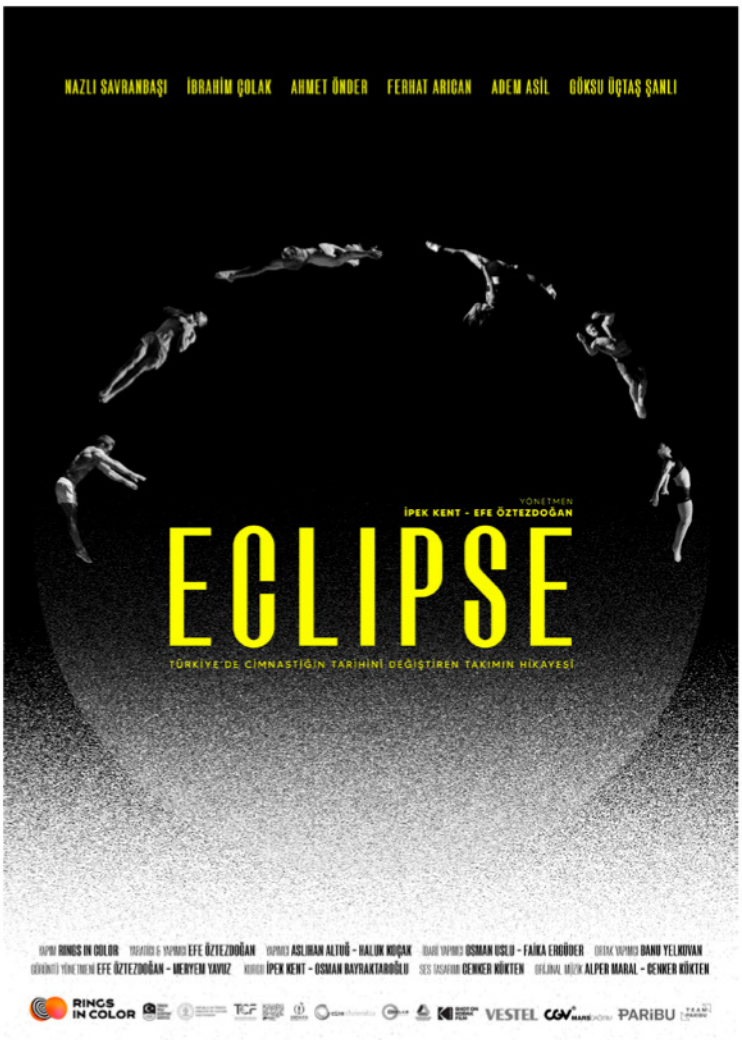
In the Costa del Sol, you can continue to excel in your career while also finding time to enjoy the simple pleasures of life. It's a place where professional ambitions and personal happiness go hand in hand. So, if you're ready to trade in your daily grind for a life that feels like a permanent vacation, Costa del Sol is calling your name.

Pack your bags, and prescribe yourself a dose of the Mediterranean dream. Your future self will thank you, I guarantee.

THE HOTTEST MOVIE RELEASES SO FAR

5 Must-Watch Films

2024 has proven to be an exceptional year for cinema, with a plethora of films captivating audiences around the globe. From blockbuster hits to critically acclaimed dramas, the movie landscape this year has offered something for everyone. Whether you're a fan of action-packed thrillers, heartwarming tales, or thought-provoking sci-fi, the 2024 movie lineup has not disappointed. As we move through the year, certain films have emerged as standout successes, drawing both box office numbers and critical praise. In this article, we'll take a closer look at the hottest movie releases of 2024 so far, exploring their plots, star-studded casts, and the impact they've had on audiences and critics alike.



Eclipse (2024)

"Eclipse" is a thought-provoking science fiction thriller set in the year 2057, a time when humanity faces the dire consequences of decades of environmental neglect.
The Earth is on the brink of ecological collapse, with rising temperatures, dwindling resources, and unprecedented natural disasters threatening the survival of life as we know it. In the midst of this chaos, a team of brilliant scientists, led by the visionary Dr. Eleanor Kane (played by Tessa Thompson), embarks on a groundbreaking mission to develop a technology that can harness the energy of solar eclipses—a phenomenon that has long fascinated humankind but has remained largely untapped.
The film begins with the discovery of an ancient manuscript in a remote monastery in Tibet, which details a mysterious connection between solar eclipses and the Earth's energy cycles. Intrigued by this discovery, Dr. Kane and her team, including the skeptical but brilliant physicist Dr. Oliver Graham (Benedict Cumberbatch) and the maverick engineer Tom Hale (Tom Hardy), set out to uncover the secrets hidden within the manuscript. Their research leads them to a remote desert in Arizona, where they build a massive facility designed to capture and store the immense energy released during a solar eclipse.

As the team works tirelessly to perfect the technology, tensions rise within the group, fueled by personal conflicts and the growing pressure to deliver results. Dr. Kane, driven by the memory of her parents, who died in a catastrophic hurricane, is determined to succeed at any cost. Meanwhile, Dr. Graham, haunted by his past failures and the ethical implications of their work, begins to question the morality of their mission. Tom Hale, who has his own demons to confront, becomes increasingly reckless as the project progresses, pushing the team to the brink of disaster.
The film reaches its climax during a total solar eclipse, where the team successfully activates their technology, resulting in a spectacular display of energy that temporarily stabilizes the Earth's climate. However, their triumph is short-lived as they soon discover that their actions have unforeseen consequences. The energy harnessed from the eclipse triggers a series of anomalies in the fabric of space-time, leading to catastrophic events across the globe. Earthquakes, tsunamis, and violent storms ravage the planet, and the team realizes that they have inadvertently set in motion a chain of events that could spell the end of humanity.

In the final act, Dr. Kane, Dr. Graham, and Tom Hale must confront their own fears and insecurities as they race against time to reverse the damage they have caused. The film delves deep into the characters' psyches, exploring themes of guilt, redemption, and the human capacity for self-destruction. In a desperate bid to save the world, the team makes the ultimate sacrifice, using their own lives to power a final, desperate attempt to undo the damage and restore balance to the planet.
Cast Performances
The performances in "Eclipse" are nothing short of stellar. Tessa Thompson shines as Dr. Eleanor Kane, bringing both intensity and vulnerability to her role as a scientist driven by a deep-seated need to make a difference in the world. Benedict Cumberbatch delivers a nuanced performance as Dr. Oliver Graham, a man torn between his intellectual pursuits and his growing doubts about the ethical implications of their work. Tom Hardy, as the troubled engineer Tom Hale, is captivating, adding a layer of complexity and unpredictability to the character that keeps audiences on the edge of their seats.

The Last Heist (2024)

"The Last Heist" is an adrenaline-pumping action thriller that masterfully blends high-stakes heist drama with deep character development. Set against the gritty backdrop of a sprawling, unnamed metropolis, the film follows a team of seasoned criminals as they come together for one final job—a meticulously planned bank heist that promises to set them up for life. The narrative is driven by tension, betrayal, and unexpected twists, making it one of the most gripping films of the year.

The film opens with the introduction of the team's leader, Mia Caldwell (played by Charlize Theron), a brilliant but emotionally scarred mastermind who has spent years in the criminal underworld. Having recently lost her brother in a botched robbery, Mia is determined to make this last heist a success and leave the life of crime behind for good. Her motivation is fueled by the desire to secure a better future for her niece, who she's been raising since her brother's death.

Mia assembles a team of experts, each with their own unique skills and personal stakes in the heist. Markus King (Idris Elba) is the team's muscle—a former military operative with a history of violence and a past that haunts him. Despite his tough exterior, Markus is a man of honor, bound by a code of loyalty to his team. Carlos Rios (Pedro Pascal) is the tech genius and hacker, a man with a troubled past who sees this job as his last chance to escape his demons and start anew. Rounding out the team is Sarah Mills (Jodie Comer), a master of disguise and infiltration, whose calm demeanor hides a complex inner life marked by loss and regret.

The target is a high-security bank vault rumored to hold millions in cash and priceless artifacts. However, as the team begins their meticulous preparations, they realize that the job is far more complicated than they initially thought. The vault is protected by cutting-edge security systems, a ruthless private security force, and the watchful eyes of the city's most powerful crime lord, Victor Marchand (played by Mads Mikkelsen). Victor has a personal vendetta against Mia, blaming her for a betrayal that occurred years earlier, and he will stop at nothing to see her fail.

The heist itself is a masterclass in tension and suspense. The action unfolds in real-time, with every second counting as the team executes their plan with precision. The film doesn't shy away from the gritty realities of the criminal world—things go wrong, plans unravel, and the team must adapt on the fly to survive. The heist scenes are meticulously choreographed, with heart-stopping moments of danger, clever improvisations, and explosive action sequences that keep the audience on the edge of their seats.

However, "The Last Heist" is not just about the action. The film delves deep into the psychology of its characters, exploring what drives them to live on the edge and what they're willing to sacrifice for one last shot at freedom. The narrative is rife with twists and turns, with betrayals and unexpected alliances that keep the audience guessing until the very end. As the team navigates the treacherous world of the heist, they're forced to confront their own demons, and the lines between right and wrong, friend and foe, become increasingly blurred.

In the final act, the heist reaches its climax in a pulse-pounding sequence that sees the team racing against time, battling not only the forces arrayed against them but also their own personal conflicts. The film doesn't hold back on the emotional stakes, with each character facing a moment of truth that will determine their fate. The ending is both satisfying and bittersweet, offering a resolution that feels earned and true to the characters' journeys.

Cast Performances

The cast of "The Last Heist" delivers performances that are both powerful and nuanced, bringing depth and complexity to their roles. Charlize Theron shines as Mia Caldwell, imbuing the character with a fierce determination and a vulnerability that makes her both formidable and relatable. Idris Elba's portrayal of Markus King is equally compelling, as he balances the character's physical prowess with a deep-seated sense of honor and loyalty. Pedro Pascal brings a mix of charm and desperation to Carlos Rios, while Jodie Comer's Sarah Mills is a masterclass in controlled intensity, her every move calculated and purposeful. Mads Mikkelsen as Victor Marchand is a standout, delivering a chilling performance as the antagonist who is as ruthless as he is charismatic. His presence adds an additional layer of tension to the film, as his character's personal vendetta against Mia raises the stakes for the entire team.

After the Storm (2024)

"After the Storm" is a heart-wrenching drama that explores the aftermath of a devastating hurricane that ravages a small coastal town in the southern United States. Set in the fictional town of Cypress Bay, the film tells the intertwined stories of a group of survivors as they struggle to rebuild their lives, confront their pasts, and find hope in the wake of unimaginable loss. Directed by Barry Jenkins (Moonlight, If Beale Street Could Talk), "After the Storm" is a powerful exploration of human resilience, community, and the enduring strength of the human spirit.

The film opens with a breathtaking sequence of the hurricane making landfall, capturing the sheer terror and chaos as the storm tears through Cypress Bay. The camera follows various residents as they scramble for safety—families huddled in their homes, rescue workers braving the elements, and those who were unable to evacuate in time. The intensity of the storm is depicted with a raw, visceral realism that sets the tone for the emotional journey that follows.

As the storm passes and the floodwaters recede, the true scope of the devastation becomes apparent. Entire neighborhoods are reduced to rubble, lives are lost, and those who survive are left to pick up the pieces. The film focuses on four main characters, each dealing with the aftermath in their own way.

Lena Patterson (Viola Davis) is a retired schoolteacher who has lived in Cypress Bay her entire life. She lost her husband to cancer a few years before the storm and now faces the daunting task of rebuilding her home alone. Lena's journey is one of quiet strength and determination as she navigates the challenges of starting over in a community that has been shattered. Through her, the film explores themes of grief, healing, and the importance of community.

Tyler Morris (Michael B. Jordan) is a firefighter and single father who was on the front lines during the storm, risking his life to save others. Despite his heroism, Tyler is wracked with guilt over the lives he couldn't save, particularly a young boy who drowned when the floodwaters overtook his home. Tyler's story is one of redemption and self-forgiveness as he struggles to reconcile his sense of duty with his overwhelming grief.

The narrative is deeply character-driven, with each of the four main characters undergoing significant emotional arcs. The film examines the complexities of human emotion—grief, anger, guilt, and hope—while also offering a meditation on the human capacity for resilience. Through their personal struggles, the characters come to realize that rebuilding isn't just about physical structures; it's about healing relationships, mending broken spirits, and finding a way to move forward.

Cast Performances

The performances in "After the Storm" are universally acclaimed, with each actor delivering a deeply emotional and nuanced portrayal of their character. Viola Davis anchors the film with her portrayal of Lena Patterson, bringing a quiet dignity and strength to the role. Her performance is both subtle and powerful, conveying the deep reserves of resilience within her character.

Michael B. Jordan's portrayal of Tyler Morris is equally compelling, as he captures the internal struggle of a man who is both a hero and a deeply flawed individual. His performance is marked by a raw vulnerability that makes Tyler's journey of self-forgiveness all the more poignant.

Florence Pugh shines as Sophie Collins, bringing a mix of determination and fragility to her role as a young mother facing an uncertain future. Her chemistry with Paul Mescal, who plays her husband Ethan, adds depth to their storyline, making their separation and eventual reunion all the more impactful.

Mahershala Ali delivers a heartbreaking performance as Darnell Washington, portraying the character's grief and regret with a quiet intensity that lingers long after the film ends. His journey toward self-forgiveness is one of the most powerful arcs in the film, and Ali's portrayal has been widely praised for its emotional depth.

Galactic Empire (2024)

"Galactic Empire" is an epic space opera that thrusts audiences into the heart of a galaxy on the brink of war, where the fate of entire civilizations hangs in the balance. Directed by Denis Villeneuve, known for his work on Dune and Blade Runner 2049, this visually stunning and narratively complex film offers a sweeping tale of power, rebellion, and destiny.
Set in a distant future where humanity has spread across the stars, the galaxy is ruled by the tyrannical Galactic Empire, an oppressive regime led by the enigmatic and ruthless Emperor Valerius Kane (played by Ralph Fiennes). The Empire maintains its grip on the galaxy through a combination of military might, political intrigue, and the mysterious power of the Aetherium, a substance that fuels both their technology and their dominance. The Aetherium is a rare and powerful resource, found only on a handful of planets, and its control is central to the Empire's strength.

The film's protagonist, Captain Aiden Rex (Oscar Isaac), is a disillusioned former officer of the Imperial Navy who has turned against the Empire after witnessing the atrocities committed in its name. Haunted by the destruction of his home planet, Aiden becomes a key figure in the burgeoning rebellion—a coalition of planets and factions united in their desire to overthrow the Empire and restore freedom to the galaxy.

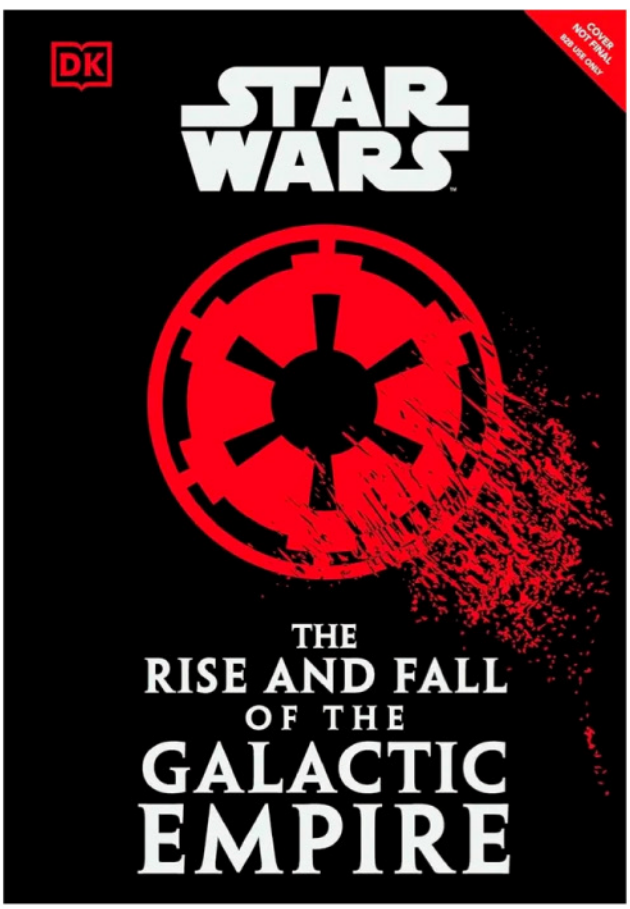
The rebellion is led by Princess Elara Tython (played by Zendaya), the last surviving member of the royal family of the planet Tython, which was annihilated by the Empire in its quest to control the Aetherium. Elara is a charismatic and determined leader, driven by a fierce desire for justice and a deep connection to the ancient traditions of her people. Under her guidance, the rebellion gains momentum, drawing support from diverse planets and cultures across the galaxy.

As the rebels move closer to their goal, they uncover a shocking secret about the Aetherium—one that could change the balance of power in the galaxy forever. This revelation sets the stage for an epic confrontation between the forces of the Empire and the rebellion, culminating in a spectacular and emotionally charged battle that will determine the fate of billions. Throughout the film, the characters grapple with complex moral dilemmas and the heavy burden of leadership. Aiden struggles with his guilt and the weight of the lives he has taken, while Elara faces the challenge of uniting a fractured galaxy under a common cause. Their personal journeys are interwoven with the broader conflict, adding depth and emotional resonance to the epic scale of the story.

The film's climax takes place on Krylos, the Empire's heavily fortified capital planet, where the final battle unfolds in a stunning display of visual effects, combining large-scale space battles with intense ground combat. The rebels, vastly outnumbered and outgunned, must rely on their ingenuity, courage, and the power of the Aetherium to turn the tide against the Empire. The confrontation between Aiden and Valerius is a highlight of the film, with the two characters embodying the opposing forces of freedom and tyranny, hope and despair.
Cast Performances
The cast of "Galactic Empire" delivers exceptional performances, bringing depth and nuance to their characters. Oscar Isaac's portrayal of Aiden Rex is both compelling and sympathetic, as he captures the character's internal conflict and the burden of his past actions. His chemistry with Zendaya's Elara Tython is a driving force of the film, as their characters' relationship evolves from strategic alliance to something deeper and more personal.

Zendaya shines as Princess Elara, bringing a mix of regal authority and youthful determination to the role. Her performance is both powerful and vulnerable, making Elara a complex and relatable leader. John Boyega adds charm and wit to the film as Kael Varrick, while also delivering on the emotional stakes of his character's journey. Florence Pugh's Nara Thorne is a standout, as she balances the character's intellectual brilliance with her own personal struggles and the weight of her knowledge about the Aetherium.

Ralph Fiennes is chilling as Emperor Valerius Kane, embodying the cold, calculating nature of a ruler who will stop at nothing to maintain his power. His performance adds a menacing presence to the film, making Valerius a formidable antagonist who poses a genuine threat to the heroes.



The Legacy of Silence (2024)

"The Legacy of Silence" is a gripping psychological thriller that delves into the dark secrets of a seemingly idyllic small town, unearthing long-buried truths that threaten to unravel the lives of its inhabitants. Directed by David Fincher, known for his work on Gone Girl and Zodiac, this film explores the themes of memory, guilt, and the devastating impact of silence over generations.

The story is set in the quiet town of Willow Creek, where life appears tranquil on the surface but is underpinned by a sinister history. The film follows Evelyn Harper (Cate Blanchett), a successful author who returns to Willow Creek after the death of her estranged mother, Margaret (Charlotte Rampling). Evelyn hasn't been back to her hometown in over 20 years, haunted by traumatic memories from her childhood. Her return is not just a matter of settling her mother's estate; it's an opportunity to confront the ghosts of her past and seek answers to questions that have plagued her for decades.

As Evelyn sorts through her mother's belongings, she discovers a series of cryptic letters and photographs that suggest a shocking family secret. These revelations begin to unravel the carefully constructed façade of her life, forcing her to question everything she thought she knew about her family and her past. The more she digs, the more she realizes that her mother's death may not have been as straightforward as it seemed.

The film introduces Detective Sam Porter (Jake Gyllenhaal), a weary investigator who has been quietly obsessed with a series of cold cases involving missing children in Willow Creek, cases that have remained unsolved for decades. When Evelyn's mother's death is revealed to be a potential homicide, Sam sees a connection to the old cases and begins working with Evelyn to uncover the truth.

As Evelyn and Sam delve deeper, they encounter resistance from the town's tight-knit community, where everyone seems to have something to hide. Key figures in the town include Mayor Richard Thompson (Gary Oldman), who has been in power for as long as anyone can remember, and Dr. Helen Worth (Tilda Swinton), the town's enigmatic psychiatrist who has a deep knowledge of Willow Creek's darkest secrets. As the investigation progresses, Evelyn's memories begin to resurface, revealing a traumatic event from her childhood that she had long suppressed. These flashbacks, depicted in haunting detail, form a crucial part of the narrative, blending past and present as Evelyn's fractured psyche struggles to make sense of the truth.

The tension escalates as Evelyn and Sam uncover a hidden network of individuals who have gone to great lengths to protect the town's reputation, including falsifying evidence and silencing those who come too close to the truth. The closer they get to solving the mystery, the more dangerous their investigation becomes, culminating in a shocking and harrowing climax that forces Evelyn to confront the full extent of the legacy of silence that has plagued her family and the town for generations.

The film's narrative structure is nonlinear, with the story unfolding through a series of flashbacks and present-day investigations. This approach not only heightens the suspense but also reflects Evelyn's fragmented memories and the process of piecing together the truth. The final act of the film is a masterclass in tension, as the full scope of the town's dark history is revealed, leading to a devastating conclusion that leaves no one unscathed.

Cast Performances

The cast of "The Legacy of Silence" delivers outstanding performances that bring depth and nuance to the film's complex characters. Cate Blanchett shines as Evelyn Harper, portraying a woman on the brink of emotional collapse who is driven by an intense need for closure. Her performance is both powerful and subtle, capturing the internal conflict of a character who is simultaneously strong and vulnerable, determined and haunted.

Jake Gyllenhaal's portrayal of Detective Sam Porter is equally compelling, as he embodies the role of a man consumed by his own demons and driven by a relentless pursuit of the truth. His chemistry with Blanchett is palpable, adding a layer of tension and mutual respect to their partnership as they navigate the murky waters of Willow Creek's secrets.

Gary Oldman's portrayal of Mayor Richard Thompson is chilling, as he brings a sinister charm to the character, embodying the duplicitous nature of a man who presents himself as a pillar of the community while hiding dark secrets. Tilda Swinton is captivating as Dr. Helen Worth, delivering a performance that is both unsettling and mesmerizing, as she becomes increasingly entangled in the mystery.

Charlotte Rampling, in her role as Evelyn's mother Margaret, delivers a haunting performance through flashbacks and Evelyn's memories, providing a poignant counterpoint to the present-day narrative. Her character's enigmatic nature and the secrets she harbored are central to the film's mystery, making her presence felt even in death.

HOW TO COOK UP SOME LOVE!

with Singer Kassi Jayde

Kassi Jayde is a rising soulful musician from a small town in Montana in the USA. After having a successful career in morning radio as an on-air host with two nationally syndicated segments, she left radio to follow her dream and be a full-time musician, and quickly had one of her original songs get placement on the hit television program "Switched At Birth". Now a full-time singer, Kassi gives us the low-down on her love of baking, social media tips and how guys can win over her heart, since she is a single gal!

Baking & singing... If you could do one for the rest of your life, which would it be and why? Both singing and baking provide different fulfilling purposes in my life. I started singing before I started baking, but I started baking to combat writer's block as well as imposter syndrome. I'm not sure I would have picked up baking if it were not for singing. Oddly- they go hand in hand in my life right now.

What are some of your favorite things to bake? After learning that most sourdough in stores is not real sourdough, and the flavor is faked with lemon juice while still using active yeast, it defeats the healing properties that make sourdough so wonderful. I was determined to create my active starter, and after much research, I realized the older the starter, the better. I purchased a 40+ year dehydrated starter from Etsy and brought it to life and I am fully obsessed. I can confidently say I am in my sourdough era. I love to bake anything sourdough. Lately, it has been Sourdough Batards, Sourdough Baguettes, and Sourdough discard crackers.

Can you give us the step-by-step recipe for something so we can bake it at home too? YES! My favorite thing to teach others to make is sourdough discard crackers. All you have to do is take your desired amount of discard from your active or inactive sourdough starter. Melt a couple of tablespoons of butter, mix, and add desired seasoning. I have been using sesame seeds and everything but the bagel seasoning. Spread a thin layer onto parchment paper on a cookie sheet, and bake at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes or light brown.

In terms of singing, what can your fans be on the lookout for? Yes! NEW MUSIC is in the works- but it will not be released until next year. For the first time in my life (aside from Covid) I am not gigging every day, sometimes twice a day; for 5-10 hours. I had to go through a "dark night of the soul" aka "ego death" and realize why I moved to Nashville. I moved here to write music and get clarity about my authentic tone, brand, and style. When you are gigging as much as I was, it can be hard to continue developing your own personal, musical imprint. A working musician regurgitates an established brand and sound the majority of the time- instead of harnessing their art and unique

Gibson

musical signature. I would say my style is somewhere between soul, country, and southern rock. I have also been teaching myself blues harmonica lessons, and you can expect to hear harmonica in the new music.

How important is social media to the success of a singer these days? Talent alone has never been "enough" to make it. Social media almost seems to be more important than talent these days, honestly. AI has proved to us that it can replace all of the real songwriters, singers, audio engineers, and producers out there, plus make a hit based on analytical data. That's some scary "competition" at a very low cost. If Artists are not actively on social media, promoting their unique musical imprint- musical success is close to impossible.

Who is one person you would love to collaborate with? Susan Tedeschi. She has always been one of my favorite voices. She is soulful, shreds on guitar, and is also married to the GOAT of slide guitar, Derek Trucks.

Since you are popular on social media, do you get a lot of DMs? How do you handle your DMs? Yes, I do get a lot of DM's. I try to pick 1 day each week and answer fans. It's not practical to answer everyone, but I give them options to communicate via subscription platforms if they aren't getting through.

What is the worst pick-up line a guy has used on you? I'm not sure about the exact line- but nothing turns me off more than the guy who invites you to his home to "Netflix and Chill" before a public coffee, lunch, or dinner. it's not about the money spent- It's about the intention behind the time spent.

As a single dog mom, what can a guy do to win the hearts of you and your pets? I have 2 puppies, 2 days apart in age, and they just turned one year old in July. I have a Frenchie and a Miniature Dachshund. The Frenchie has a vision disability- and acts "fake aggressive" for about 10 minutes when meeting someone new. If the guy can remain calm while my Frenchie goes nuts, I'll know he's a keeper!

Describe to us your perfect first date? I think first dates should be low pressure, and all about getting to know each other. Somewhere not too loud, where we can comfortably converse- Coffee, lunch, anything like that.

When not singing or baking, what can we find Kassi Jayde doing? I enjoy doing hot yoga, and being in nature with my dogs. I also have a guilty pleasure, and love to shop for outfits.

DELICIOUS & NUTRITIOUS

4 Healthy Wrap Recipes to Satisfy Your Cravings

Wraps are the perfect meal option for those who want something quick, easy, and versatile without compromising on health. Whether you're looking for a light lunch, a satisfying dinner, or a portable snack, wraps can be customized to suit your taste and dietary preferences. From protein-packed fillings to vibrant veggies and flavorful sauces, the possibilities are endless. In this article, we're sharing four healthy wrap recipes that are not only delicious but also packed with nutrients to keep you energized throughout the day. Let's dive into these tasty creations!

Grilled Chicken and Avocado Wrap

Ingredients

- 1 whole wheat tortilla
- 100g grilled chicken breast, sliced
- ½ avocado, sliced
- 1 handful of spinach leaves
- 1 tablespoon Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Spread Greek yogurt on the tortilla.
2. Add grilled chicken, avocado slices, and spinach leaves.
3. Drizzle with lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.
4. Roll up the tortilla, slice in half, and enjoy!

Mediterranean Veggie Wrap

Ingredients

- 1 spinach wrap
- ¼ cup hummus
- 1 roasted red bell pepper, sliced
- ¼ cup cucumber, sliced
- ¼ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 tablespoon balsamic glaze

Instructions

1. Spread hummus over the spinach wrap.
2. Layer with roasted red bell pepper, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, and feta cheese.
3. Drizzle with balsamic glaze.
4. Wrap tightly, slice in half, and serve.

Turkey and Cranberry Wrap

Ingredients

- 1 whole wheat wrap
- 100g sliced turkey breast
- 2 tablespoons cranberry sauce
- ¼ cup baby arugula
- 1 slice of Swiss cheese
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Instructions

1. Spread Dijon mustard over the wrap.
2. Layer with sliced turkey, cranberry sauce, Swiss cheese, and baby arugula.
3. Roll up the wrap, slice, and enjoy a taste of Thanksgiving in a wrap!

Spicy Black Bean and Quinoa Wrap

Ingredients

- 1 tomato basil wrap
- ½ cup cooked quinoa
- ¼ cup black beans, rinsed and drained
- ¼ cup corn kernels
- 1 tablespoon salsa
- ¼ avocado, diced
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce (optional)

Instructions

1. Mix the quinoa, black beans, corn, salsa, and hot sauce (if using) in a bowl.
2. Spread the mixture evenly over the tomato basil wrap.
3. Top with diced avocado and chopped cilantro.
4. Roll up the wrap, slice in half, and dig into this flavorful, protein-packed meal.

Incredible Beauty

Eliana B.

IG @elianab.official

Photographer Arthur St. John | @arthurstjohn
HMUA Silva Yesayan | @styledbysilvay

Congratulations on your FHM USA cover! What does this mean to you? Thank you so much! Being on the cover of FHM USA is a tremendous honor for me. It represents not just a personal achievement, but also a chance to step into the spotlight and share my journey with others. I'm grateful for the opportunity and excited to see where this experience takes me.

Tell us about your photo shoot: I had an incredible photoshoot with the talented Arthur St. John, who captured stunning shots, and the lovely Silva, who worked her magic on my glam. The entire experience was a blast! I felt so supported by such a skilled team, and the positive, creative vibe on set made it all the more enjoyable.

Can you give us a bit of a background on your career as a model and where it all started? I've had some exciting opportunities in modeling, including working on covers and being featured in some well-known magazines. Each experience has taught me something new and has been incredibly rewarding. I'm grateful for every moment and look forward to what comes next.

Do you speak any other languages besides English? Yes, I am Brazilian so I speak fluent Portuguese and Spanish.

What helps you decompress and relax? I enjoy spending time in nature. I find that being outdoors helps clear my mind. I also love listening to music or diving into a good book, it allows me to escape and unwind. I also enjoy spending time with friends, whether it's catching up over brunch or a cozy movie night at home.

How romantic are you? I'd say I'm pretty romantic! I am also very affectionate. I believe that romance is all about those fun, thoughtful moments that make life special. I think it's the effort that counts.

Having a full schedule must make it difficult for you to get much alone time, talk to us about the top 3 must-dos to ensure you fit in some well-deserved downtime. Having a full schedule can be challenging, but I make sure to prioritize some downtime. First, I always schedule 'me time' into my week, whether it's for reading or just relaxing. Second, I love to take breaks outdoors, as being in nature helps me recharge. Lastly, I try to disconnect from my phone for a bit to really focus on myself and those around me and unwind.

What does it mean for you to be seen as a strong, intelligent, ambitious woman? Being seen as a strong, intelligent, and ambitious woman means a lot to me. It reflects my resilience and dedication to personal growth. Strength is about overcoming challenges, intelligence is about being open to learning, and ambition drives me to pursue my goals. I hope to inspire others to believe in themselves and their potential.

Do you have any hidden talents? I wouldn't say I have any hidden talents, but I'm always open to trying new things. I enjoy picking up new hobbies, even if I'm not a pro at them. I think it's all about having fun and learning along the way.

What is your favorite body part on you? on him? on her? My favorite body part on me is my smile. On others, it's the eyes...you can learn a lot about someone through their eyes.

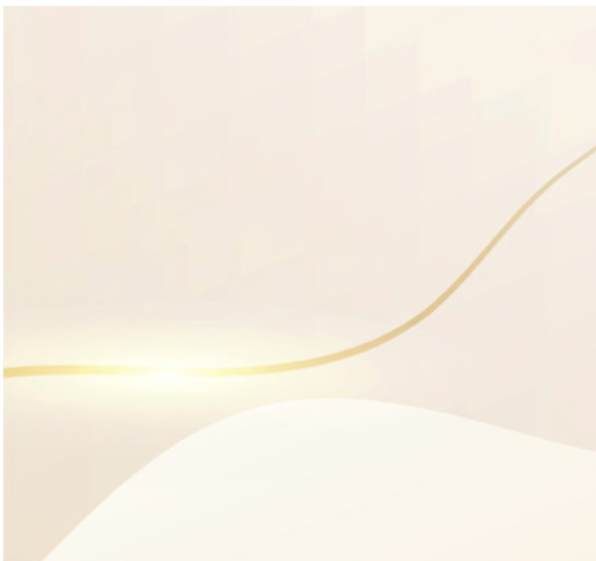
Describe your dream date: I think what matters is the company above all things. Great conversation over a nice bottle of wine or champagne in a romantic setting.

If you could eat just one food for the rest of your life, what would it be and why? It would have to be Brazilian food! I love a good home-cooked Brazilian meal.

What animal best describes you and why? I'd say a panther. They're strong, elegant, and have a sense of freedom and mystery.

Do you have any regrets in life? I think everyone has moments in life they wish they could have handled differently, but I wouldn't call them regrets. Instead, I see those experiences as lessons that have shaped who I am today.

If you could change any one thing in the world, what would it be and why? There are so many things in the world that could be changed, but I would begin with something simple that everyone can do, which is promote kindness. I believe cultivating a culture of compassion can make a real difference. When more people engage in small acts of kindness, it can create a ripple effect. A little empathy goes a long way, especially when we consider that we never know what challenges others may be going through.



EXPLORING SEXUALITY

Understanding and Embracing Sexual Diversity

Sexuality is one of the most personal and complex aspects of human identity, yet it remains one of the least understood and most frequently misunderstood areas of our lives. In a world where diversity is increasingly recognized and celebrated, the spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities is more visible than ever before. However, this visibility has not always translated into understanding or acceptance. For many, discussions around sexuality are still shrouded in stigma, misconceptions, and cultural or religious taboos.

This article seeks to demystify sexual diversity by exploring the rich and varied experiences of those who fall outside of traditional norms. From the intricacies of sexual orientation and gender identity to the ways in which culture and religion shape our understanding of these concepts, we will delve into the multiple dimensions of sexuality. Along the way, we will hear personal stories from individuals who have embraced their sexual identities, often in the face of significant challenges, and we will examine the critical role that education and advocacy play in promoting a more inclusive and compassionate society.

In exploring these topics, our goal is not only to provide a clearer understanding of what it means to be sexually diverse but also to encourage open and respectful dialogue around these issues. By fostering a deeper understanding of sexual diversity, we can contribute to a world where everyone is free to express their true selves without fear of judgment or discrimination. Whether you are looking to better understand your own sexual identity or to support others in their journey, this article offers insights and perspectives that are both informative and empowering.

TIME FOR SEX

Sexual Orientations & Identities

Sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental aspects of who we are, shaping not only our relationships but also our sense of self. Yet, these concepts are often misunderstood or oversimplified, leading to confusion and even discrimination. This section aims to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the various sexual orientations and gender identities, highlighting the complexity and diversity of human sexuality.

Understanding Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to the enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions that a person feels towards others. These attractions can be towards people of the same sex, a different sex, or

more than one sex. It's important to recognize that sexual orientation exists on a spectrum, rather than within rigid categories. Here are some of the most commonly recognized sexual orientations:

• ***Heterosexual:*** Individuals who are attracted to people of a different sex. Heterosexual men are typically attracted to women, and heterosexual women are attracted to men.

• ***Homosexual:*** Individuals who are attracted to people of the same sex. This term includes gay men and lesbian women. It's important to note that "gay" can be used as an umbrella term for both gay men and lesbian women.

• ***Bisexual:*** Individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Bisexual people may experience attraction to both men and women, although the degree of attraction to each gender can vary widely among individuals.

• ***Pansexual:*** Individuals who are attracted to people regardless of their gender. Pansexuality is often described as an attraction to a person's personality or characteristics, rather than their gender identity.

• ***Asexual:*** Individuals who experience little to no sexual attraction to others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, with some asexual people experiencing romantic attraction or a limited degree of sexual attraction under specific circumstances (known as "gray-asexuality" or "demisexuality").

Exploring Gender Identity

Gender identity is distinct from sexual orientation; it refers to a person's deeply felt internal experience of gender, which may or may not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. While many people identify as male or female (aligning with their assigned sex at birth), others may identify as a different gender, or no gender at all. Here are some key terms related to gender identity:

• ***Cisgender:*** Individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person assigned female at birth who identifies as a woman is considered cisgender.

• ***Transgender:*** Individuals whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman would be considered transgender. It's important to note that transgender is an umbrella term that can include a wide range of gender identities.

• ***Non-Binary:*** Individuals who do not identify exclusively as male or female. Non-binary people may identify as both genders, neither gender, or as a different gender entirely. Some non-binary people also identify as genderqueer, genderfluid, or agender (having no gender).

• ***Genderqueer/Genderfluid:*** These terms often describe individuals whose gender identity or expression is not fixed and may change over time or depending on the context. Genderqueer people may reject traditional gender distinctions, while genderfluid individuals may feel that their gender changes at different times.

• ***Agender:*** Individuals who do not identify with any gender. Agender people may see themselves as being without a gender, or as having a neutral gender.

Intersection of Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

Sexual orientation and gender identity are distinct but interconnected aspects of a person's identity. While sexual orientation describes who a person is attracted to, gender identity describes who they are in terms of their gender. For example, a transgender woman (a person assigned male at birth who identifies as female) could be attracted to men, women, or both, and thus identify as heterosexual, lesbian, or bisexual, respectively.

The intersection of these identities can create unique experiences and challenges. For instance, a transgender person may face different societal pressures and forms of discrimination than a cisgender person with the same sexual orientation. Similarly, non-binary individuals may find that their gender identity complicates traditional understandings of sexual orientation, leading to a need for more inclusive and nuanced conversations about attraction and relationships. Recognizing and respecting the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities is essential for fostering an inclusive society. It allows individuals to express their true selves and form authentic connections with others, free from the constraints of societal expectations or stereotypes. As we move forward in this article, we will explore how culture, religion, and personal experiences shape our understanding and acceptance of sexual diversity, and how education and advocacy can promote a more inclusive world.

The Intersection of Culture & Sexual Diversity

Sexuality is not just a private matter; it is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious frameworks that shape our identities and societies. The way sexual diversity is understood and accepted can vary widely depending on cultural norms, religious beliefs, and societal values. This section explores how these powerful forces intersect with sexual orientation and gender identity, often creating complex dynamics that influence individual lives and communities.

Cultural Perspectives on Sexuality

Culture plays a significant role in shaping our perceptions of sexuality and gender. From the language we use to describe sexual identities to the norms that govern sexual behavior, cultural context is critical in

understanding sexual diversity. In some cultures, there is a broad acceptance of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, while in others, these are heavily stigmatized or even criminalized.

• ***Western Cultural Shifts:*** In many Western cultures, particularly in recent decades, there has been a growing acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities. Movements for civil rights and equality have challenged traditional views on sexuality, leading to greater visibility and legal protections for sexual minorities. This shift is reflected in popular media, legal reforms, and the increasing normalization of same-sex relationships and non-binary identities.

• ***Non-Western Cultural Contexts:*** In contrast, many non-Western cultures maintain more traditional views on sexuality. For instance, in parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, same-sex relationships and non-binary identities may be viewed as foreign or incompatible with cultural values. In some cases, colonial histories have imposed rigid gender norms and anti-LGBTQ+ laws that continue to affect attitudes and policies today. However, it is important to recognize that non-Western cultures are not monolithic, and there are diverse and often nuanced perspectives within these regions. For example, some Indigenous cultures in North America recognize Two-Spirit people, who embody both masculine and feminine qualities, as integral parts of their communities.

• ***The Role of Media and Globalization:*** Globalization and the proliferation of digital media have introduced new cultural dynamics, spreading both Western liberal values and conservative backlash to different parts of the world. The internet has become a platform for LGBTQ+ communities to connect, share their experiences, and advocate for their rights, even in countries where such identities are marginalized. However, it has also facilitated the spread of homophobic and transphobic ideologies, often leading to cultural clashes.

Religious Views on Sexual Diversity

Religion is another powerful force that shapes attitudes towards sexual diversity. For many, religious teachings provide moral guidance on issues of sexuality, often promoting specific norms around marriage, gender roles, and sexual behavior. These teachings can significantly influence individual beliefs and societal policies, creating both challenges and opportunities for LGBTQ+ individuals.

• ***Traditional Religious Teachings:*** Many of the world's major religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism, have traditionally held conservative views on sexuality. These often emphasize heterosexual marriage as the ideal and may condemn same-sex relationships and non-binary identities. In some cases, religious texts and teachings have been interpreted in ways that justify discrimination or violence against LGBTQ+ individuals.

• ***Evolving Religious Perspectives:*** Despite these traditional stances, there is a growing movement within many religious communities to reinterpret sacred texts and teachings in ways that are more inclusive of sexual diversity. For example, some Christian denominations, such as the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church, have openly embraced LGBTQ+ members and clergy. Similarly, progressive Jewish movements, like Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism, support same-sex marriage and recognize the dignity of LGBTQ+ individuals. In Islam, some scholars and activists are advocating for a more inclusive understanding of the faith that respects diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

• ***Religious Communities and LGBTQ+ Individuals:*** For LGBTQ+ individuals who are religious, reconciling their faith with their sexual or gender identity can be a profound challenge. Many face rejection from their religious communities, which can lead to feelings of isolation, shame, or spiritual crisis. However, there are also religious organizations and support groups that provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ individuals to explore their faith in a supportive environment. These communities often play a crucial role in helping individuals maintain their spiritual well-being while embracing their true selves.

Navigating Conflicting Beliefs

The intersection of culture, religion, and sexual diversity can create significant challenges for individuals who find themselves caught between conflicting values. Whether it's reconciling religious beliefs with a non-heteronormative identity or navigating cultural expectations that are at odds with personal desires, these conflicts can be deeply distressing.

• ***Personal Struggles:*** Individuals may experience internal conflict when their sexual orientation or gender identity is at odds with their cultural or religious upbringing. This struggle can manifest in various ways, including feelings of guilt, shame, or a sense of betrayal towards one's community. For many, the process of self-acceptance involves a difficult journey of questioning and redefining their relationship with their culture and faith.

• ***Seeking Support and Finding Balance:*** Finding support is crucial for those navigating these conflicts. Counseling, peer support groups, and affirming religious or cultural communities can provide a safe space to explore these issues. For some, it may involve redefining their cultural or religious identity in a way that aligns with their sexual identity, while for others, it may involve distancing themselves from communities that are not accepting.

• ***The Importance of Inclusive***

Communities: Creating inclusive communities within cultural and religious contexts is essential for fostering acceptance and understanding. This involves not only supporting LGBTQ+ individuals but also educating the broader community about sexual diversity. By promoting open dialogue and challenging harmful stereotypes, these communities can become more welcoming and affirming for everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Personal Stories & Embracing Sexual Identity

Sexual identity is not merely a label; it's a deeply personal and evolving journey that encompasses who we are and how we relate to others. For many, this journey is filled with both challenges and triumphs as they navigate the complexities of their sexual orientation and gender identity in a world that can be both accepting and unforgiving. In this section, we delve into the personal stories of individuals who have embraced their sexual identity, highlighting the emotional, psychological, and social aspects of their experiences.

Coming Out: The Journey to Self-Acceptance

"Coming out" is a significant milestone in the lives of many LGBTQ+ individuals. It involves the process of recognizing, accepting, and openly sharing one's sexual orientation or gender identity with others. While coming out is often seen as an act of liberation, it can also be fraught with fear, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

• ***The Emotional Process:*** For many, the journey of coming out begins with an internal struggle. Realizing that one's sexual orientation or gender identity differs from societal norms can lead

to a range of emotions, including confusion, denial, fear, and eventually, acceptance. This internal process can be lengthy, as individuals grapple with their identity and its implications for their lives.

• The decision to come out is often influenced by a desire for authenticity and the need to live a life that aligns with one's true self. However, the fear of rejection, discrimination, or even violence can make this decision incredibly daunting. The process of coming out is highly individual—some may choose to come out to only a few close friends or family members, while others may decide to be open about their identity in all areas of their lives.

• ***The Impact of Coming Out:*** Coming out can have profound effects on an individual's life. For some, it leads to a sense of freedom and empowerment, as they no longer feel the need to hide a core aspect of their identity. However, for others, coming out can result in strained or broken relationships, loss of social support, or even professional or legal consequences.

• Despite these risks, many who have come out describe it as a transformative experience that ultimately leads to greater self-acceptance and fulfillment. The act of coming out is not a one-time event but an ongoing process, as individuals may need to navigate new situations and relationships throughout their lives.

The Role of Support Systems

Support systems play a crucial role in the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly during the process of coming out and embracing their sexual identity. The presence or absence of support can significantly impact an individual's mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being.

• ***Family Support:*** Family can be both a source of support and a source of conflict for LGBTQ+ individuals. Acceptance from family members can provide a strong foundation for self-confidence and resilience. In contrast, rejection or hostility from family can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety.

• Stories of supportive families often highlight the importance of unconditional love and open communication. Parents, siblings, and extended family members who educate themselves about LGBTQ+ issues and actively work to create an inclusive environment can make a world of difference in the lives of their loved ones. For those who do not receive acceptance from their biological families, chosen families—comprising friends, partners, and allies—often become critical sources of support.

• ***Friends and Community:*** Friends and community networks are also vital support systems for LGBTQ+ individuals. Friendships often serve as safe spaces where individuals can express their true selves without fear of judgment. LGBTQ+ community groups, both online and offline, provide opportunities for connection, advocacy, and shared experiences.

• In many cases, involvement in LGBTQ+ organizations or attending pride events can be empowering, offering a sense of belonging and solidarity. These communities often play a key role in helping individuals navigate the challenges of embracing their sexual identity and advocating for their rights.

Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Individuals

While progress has been made in many parts of the world, LGBTQ+ individuals continue to face significant challenges that can impact their ability to live authentically and safely. These challenges vary depending on cultural, legal, and social contexts, but they often include discrimination, prejudice, and violence.

• ***Discrimination and Prejudice:*** Discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals can occur in various forms, from subtle microaggressions to overt acts of hostility. In some places, discrimination is legally sanctioned, with laws that criminalize same-sex relationships or restrict the rights of transgender individuals. Even in more accepting environments, LGBTQ+ individuals may face workplace discrimination, housing instability, or unequal access to healthcare.

• Prejudice, often rooted in ignorance or fear, can manifest in social ostracism, verbal harassment, or even physical violence. The impact of such experiences on mental health can be severe, leading to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide among LGBTQ+ populations.

• ***Legal and Social Barriers:*** Legal barriers continue to pose significant challenges for LGBTQ+ individuals in many parts of the world. In some countries, same-sex relationships are punishable by imprisonment or even death. Transgender individuals may face legal obstacles when attempting to change their name or gender marker on official documents, leading to difficulties in accessing services or traveling safely.

• Social barriers, such as stigma and cultural norms, can also hinder the ability of LGBTQ+ individuals to live openly. In communities where traditional gender roles and heteronormative expectations are strongly enforced, LGBTQ+ individuals may feel pressured to conform or hide their identity, leading to a sense of alienation and loss of self.

• ***Resilience and Advocacy:*** Despite these challenges, LGBTQ+ individuals and communities have demonstrated remarkable resilience. Advocacy and activism have been key in advancing the rights of LGBTQ+ people globally. From grassroots movements to international organizations, LGBTQ+ advocates work tirelessly to challenge discrimination, change laws, and promote visibility and acceptance.

• Personal stories of resilience often highlight the ways in which individuals overcome adversity by drawing on their inner strength, seeking out supportive communities, and advocating for themselves and others. These stories serve as powerful reminders of the importance of visibility, representation, and the ongoing fight for equality.

The Role of Education & Advocacy

The promotion of sexual diversity and the acceptance of different sexual orientations and gender identities hinge significantly on education and advocacy. These two powerful tools have the potential to challenge ingrained prejudices, dismantle harmful stereotypes, and foster a more inclusive society. In this section, we will explore how education and advocacy efforts are driving change, the impact they have on individuals and communities, and the challenges that remain in promoting sexual diversity.

The Power of Education

Education is a cornerstone in the fight for equality and acceptance. By providing accurate information and fostering open dialogue, education can demystify sexual diversity, reduce stigma, and empower individuals to embrace their identities. This process begins in schools and continues throughout life, shaping the way societies understand and respect sexual diversity.

• ***Sexual Education in Schools:*** Comprehensive sexual education that includes discussions of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual diversity is crucial in helping young people understand and accept themselves and others. When sexual education is inclusive, it allows students of all identities to see themselves represented and provides them with the knowledge they need to navigate their relationships and sexual health.

• Inclusive sexual education also plays a key role in combating bullying and discrimination. By normalizing diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, schools can create a safer and more supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students. Research has shown that students who receive inclusive sexual education are more likely to have positive attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals and are less likely to engage in homophobic or transphobic behavior.

• However, the implementation of inclusive sexual education is often met with resistance. In many parts of the world, sexual education is still heavily influenced by traditional or religious values that exclude or stigmatize LGBTQ+ identities. This lack of representation can leave LGBTQ+ students feeling isolated or invisible, and can perpetuate misinformation and prejudice.

• ***Higher Education and Research:*** At the higher education level, academic research plays a critical role in advancing our understanding of sexual diversity. Universities and research institutions have increasingly focused on LGBTQ+ studies, exploring topics ranging from the history of sexual diversity to the social and psychological aspects of sexual orientation and gender identity.

• This research is essential for informing public policy, shaping inclusive educational curricula, and providing a solid evidence base for advocacy efforts. Furthermore, higher education institutions can serve as important spaces for activism and community-building, offering LGBTQ+ students and allies opportunities to engage in advocacy and support networks.

• Public Education Campaigns:Beyond formal education, public education campaigns are vital in reaching a broader audience and challenging societal norms. These campaigns often focus on raising awareness about LGBTQ+ issues, promoting positive representations of sexual diversity, and encouraging acceptance and inclusion.

• Examples of successful public education campaigns include Pride events, social media campaigns like the "It Gets Better" project, and awareness days such as the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB). These initiatives help to increase visibility, foster solidarity, and provide support to those who may be struggling with their identity.

Advocacy and Its Impact

Advocacy is the driving force behind social change. It involves actively working to promote and protect the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, challenge discriminatory practices, and push for legal and policy reforms. Advocacy efforts can take many forms, from grassroots activism to lobbying at the highest levels of government.

• ***Legal and Policy Advocacy:*** One of the most significant areas of advocacy is the fight for legal rights and protections for LGBTQ+ individuals. Legal advocacy has led to landmark achievements, such as the legalization of same-sex marriage in many countries, the enactment of anti-discrimination laws, and the recognition of gender identity in legal documents.

• However, legal progress is uneven, with many regions of the world still lacking basic protections for LGBTQ+ individuals. Advocacy groups continue to work tirelessly to change laws and policies that criminalize same-sex relationships, deny rights to transgender individuals, or fail to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination and violence.

• ***Community-Based Advocacy:*** Community-based advocacy is essential for addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals at the local level. This form of advocacy often focuses on providing

direct support to LGBTQ+ people, such as offering safe spaces, mental health services, and resources for those experiencing discrimination or violence.
• Community organizations also play a key role in mobilizing support for LGBTQ+ rights and creating platforms for marginalized voices to be heard. By engaging with local communities, these organizations can build alliances, educate the public, and drive change from the ground up.
• ***Global Advocacy Efforts:*** On a global scale, advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights often involves challenging international institutions, governments, and corporations to uphold human rights standards. Global advocacy groups work to ensure that LGBTQ+ rights are included in international human rights frameworks, and they often collaborate with local organizations to amplify their efforts.
• Global advocacy also involves responding to crises, such as anti-LGBTQ+ laws in specific countries, or supporting refugees fleeing persecution due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. These efforts highlight the interconnectedness of the global

LGBTQ+ movement and the importance of solidarity across borders.

Challenges & Future Directions

While significant progress has been made in promoting sexual diversity through education and advocacy, challenges remain. Resistance from conservative or religious groups, the persistence of harmful stereotypes, and the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ issues with other forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and ableism) all pose ongoing obstacles.

- ***Overcoming Resistance:*** Resistance to LGBTQ+ rights and sexual diversity education often stems from deeply ingrained cultural or religious beliefs. Overcoming this resistance requires patience, dialogue, and a willingness to engage with different perspectives. Advocates must find ways to communicate the importance of inclusion and equality in a manner that resonates with diverse audiences.
- ***Addressing Intersectionality:*** LGBTQ+ individuals are not a monolithic group, and their experiences are shaped by various intersecting identities, such as race, class, disability, and religion. Advocacy and education efforts must take these intersections into account to be truly inclusive and effective. This means addressing the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people of color, disabled LGBTQ+ individuals, and those from different cultural or religious backgrounds.
- ***Sustaining Momentum:*** As society becomes more accepting of sexual diversity, there is a risk of complacency. It is important to remember that progress is not guaranteed, and setbacks can occur. Sustaining momentum requires ongoing education, advocacy, and vigilance to protect the gains that have been made and to continue pushing for greater equality and inclusion.

Education and advocacy are indispensable in promoting sexual diversity and ensuring that LGBTQ+ individuals can live with dignity, respect, and equality. While significant strides have been made, the work is far from over. As we move forward, it is crucial to continue educating future generations, advocating for legal and social change, and supporting those who are still marginalized or oppressed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

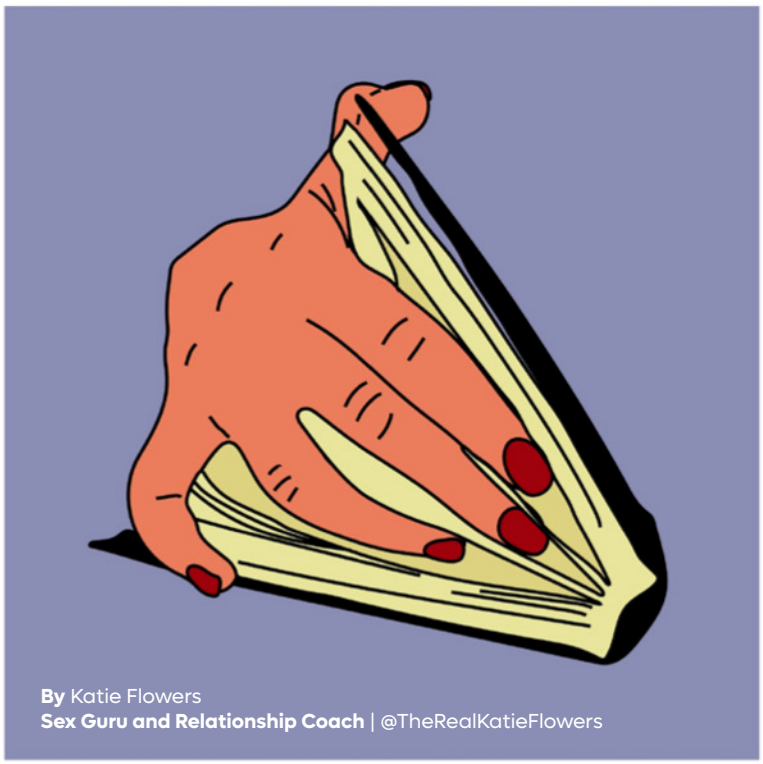
The intersection of education and advocacy creates a powerful synergy that can transform societies, challenge harmful norms, and build a world where sexual diversity is celebrated rather than feared. By embracing this mission, we can contribute to a more inclusive and just world for everyone.

Understanding and embracing sexual diversity is not just about acknowledging the existence of different orientations and identities; it's about fostering a culture of acceptance, empathy, and inclusion. Through education and advocacy, we can break down the barriers that have long kept people marginalized and ensure that everyone has the right to live authentically and without fear. By continuing to share stories, challenge norms, and promote understanding, we contribute to a world where diversity is celebrated, and all individuals are free to express their true selves. The journey toward full acceptance and equality is ongoing, but each step forward brings us closer to a more compassionate and just society.

KISS
ME
SELECT
ADJUST

KATIE'S CORNER

Navigating Sex & Relationships with Katie Flowers



By Katie Flowers
Sex Guru and Relationship Coach | @TheRealKatieFlowers

Hello My Beautiful Friends!

In the world of intimacy and sexual relationships, it's all too easy to fall into a routine, sticking to what feels safe and familiar. Many people find themselves trapped in what I like to call the "vanilla zone"—a place where comfort reigns supreme, but passion often takes a backseat. But what if I told you that stepping out of this comfort zone could turn your sex life from vanilla to a full-blown volcanic eruption of excitement and connection?

As a Sex Guru and Relationship Coach, I've seen firsthand how exploring new territories in your sexual life can reignite the spark in a relationship, build deeper connections, and even enhance your self-confidence. Today, I want to take you on a journey from vanilla to volcano, sharing insights, tips, and personal experiences that can help you unlock new dimensions of pleasure and intimacy.

The Vanilla Trap

Why We Stick to What We Know

The first step in our journey is understanding why many of us stick to what's familiar. The "vanilla trap" isn't just about liking things plain; it's about the safety that comes with routine. For many, the fear of being judged, the discomfort of vulnerability, or simply not knowing how to explore new sexual experiences can keep us in this trap. But here's the thing: sexual exploration isn't about changing who you are; it's about expanding your horizons and finding new ways to connect with your partner.

Igniting the Spark

Why Exploration Matters

Sexual exploration is more than just spicing things up in the bedroom; it's about fostering a deeper connection with yourself and your partner. When you explore new sexual experiences, you're not just adding variety—you're creating opportunities for greater intimacy, trust, and understanding. Imagine the excitement of discovering something new together, the bond that forms when you share fantasies or try something you've always been curious about. These experiences can transform a relationship, making it more dynamic, fulfilling, and volcanic.

From Vanilla to Volcano

Steps to Start Your Journey

So, how do you begin this journey? It's easier than you might think, starting with communication. Open, honest conversations with your partner about your desires, fears, and fantasies are the foundation of sexual exploration. Here's how you can start:

1. Communicate Openly: Share your fantasies and desires with your partner without fear of judgment. Ask them about theirs and create a safe space where both of you feel comfortable discussing your sexual needs.

2. Start Small: You don't have to jump into the deep end immediately. Begin with small changes—trying a new position, introducing a toy, or changing the setting. These little steps can lead to more extensive, more adventurous experiences.

3. Educate Yourself: Knowledge is power. Read up on different aspects of sexuality, attend workshops, or even watch educational videos together. The more you know, the more confident you'll feel about trying new things.

4. Explore Together: Make exploration a joint adventure. Whether it's visiting an adult store together, attending a sex-positive event, or simply setting aside time to experiment in the bedroom, doing it together strengthens your bond.

5. Respect Boundaries: Exploration is about mutual enjoyment, so always respect each

other's boundaries. It's essential to clearly communicate what you're comfortable with and check in regularly.

The Volcano Experience

What It Feels Like to Explore

So, what happens when you finally step out of the vanilla zone? The experience can be exhilarating, liberating, and incredibly satisfying. This journey leads to a renewed sense of passion and connection for many couples. You may find that the anticipation and excitement of trying something new add a whole new level of intensity to your sex life. And it's not just about the physical sensations; it's the emotional and psychological connection that deepens as you explore together.

One of the most potent aspects of sexual exploration is the confidence it builds. When you push your boundaries and discover new pleasures, you learn more about yourself—your desires, limits, and strengths. This self-awareness translates into greater confidence in all areas of life, not just in the bedroom.

Overcoming Common Fears & Misconceptions

Of course, stepping out of the vanilla zone isn't always easy. Fear or reservation is natural, especially when venturing into unfamiliar territory. Some common concerns include the fear of being judged, the worry that your partner won't be interested, or the misconception that trying new things means you're unhappy with your current sex life.

The truth is that sexual exploration is about enhancing your relationship, not fixing something that's broken. It's about growing together and finding new ways to enjoy each other's company. And remember, it's okay to take things slow. There's no rush, and every step you take is a step toward a more fulfilling and connected relationship.

QUICK TIPS FOR SEXUAL EXPLORATION BY KATIE FLOWERS

- **Set the Mood:** Create a comfortable and inviting environment that encourages intimacy.
- **Try Role-Playing:** Explore different fantasies by stepping into new roles.
- **Use Toys:** Introduce sex toys to add a new dimension to your experiences.
- **Explore Sensory Play:** Experiment with different textures, temperatures, and sensations.
- **Keep Learning:** Continue educating yourself about sexuality to stay informed and inspired!

The Road Ahead

Keeping the Volcano Erupting

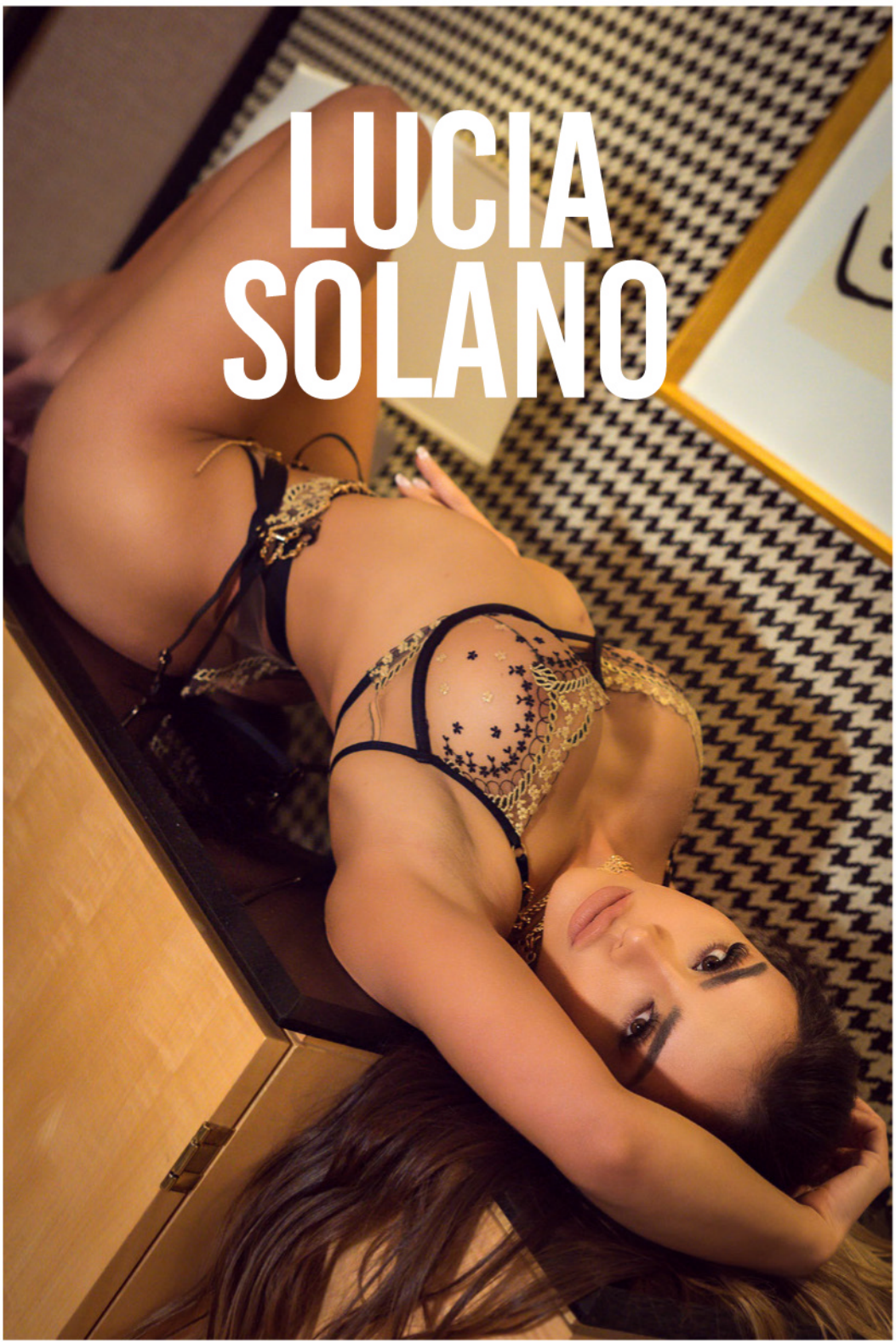
Once you've started your journey, the key is to keep the momentum going. Sexual exploration isn't a one-time event; it's an ongoing process of discovery and growth. Make a habit of checking in with your partner regularly about your sexual experiences and desires. Keep an open mind and be willing to try new things as your relationship evolves.

And most importantly, have fun with it! Sex is meant to be enjoyable, so don't take it too seriously. Laugh, play, and enjoy the journey together. After all, the goal isn't just to have a volcanic sex life—it's to build a relationship that's as passionate, dynamic, and fulfilling as you both deserve.

In conclusion, moving from vanilla to a volcano in your sex life is about embracing the journey of exploration. It's about discovering new ways to connect, finding joy in the unknown, and building a relationship that's as passionate and fulfilling as it can be. So why not take the first step today? You might find that the journey is as exciting as the destination.

OXOXO
Katie Flowers
IG: @TheRealKatieFlowers
X: @KatieFlowersMod

Katie Flowers, your trusted Sex Guru and Relationship Coach, is here to guide you on your journey to sexual exploration. Whether you're looking to reignite the spark in your relationship or take your intimacy to new heights, Katie's insights and advice can help you navigate the path from vanilla to volcano with confidence and excitement. Follow for more in IG: @TheRealKatieFlowers and X: @KatieFlowersMod



Model @Luciasolano

Photographer Jasmine Nicole | @Capturingmagikllc

We're happy to have you featured on FHM! Can you tell us a bit about yourself? Hi there, I'm Sofia, a 34-year-old model based in Las Vegas. I grew up surrounded by country life and farming, as I was raised on a small ranch in a small Texas town. I've been living in Las Vegas for the last four years where I began modeling. In my free time, you'll often find me in the kitchen cooking while unwinding with a gripping documentary, whether it's something educational or a captivating murder mystery. I also love tuning into self-help podcasts and occasionally delving into nonfiction and self-improvement books. When I'm not relaxing at home, I enjoy exploring the vibrant scene of comedy shows, concerts, and diverse cuisines, as well as jetting off to new destinations. Keeping my health a priority, my daily routine includes workouts like weightlifting and cardiovascular exercises. Balancing a busy schedule, I make sure to weave fitness into each day, maintaining a lifestyle that nurtures both my body and mind.

If you could choose one word to describe yourself, what would it be? Adaptable. From a young age, I've courageously taken risks to improve myself, gracefully adapting to any situation I encounter. While I appreciate routine, I thrive on embracing challenges and adapting to new circumstances to reach my full potential.

What are your go-to fashion and beauty essentials? I'm all about comfort and sexy, sophisticated outfits. You can't go wrong with an ultra-fitted jumpsuit; dress it up with heels or keep it casual with sneakers. My beauty essentials include Estee Lauder lip liner, Hoola bronzer, Alastin skincare line, Waterpik, and Vaseline for my feet.

Are there any particular hobbies or interests that you're passionate about? When it comes to hobbies, I often find myself occupied with work, household tasks, workouts, and cooking, making it challenging to pinpoint specific interests. Currently, I enjoy delving into educational podcasts, learning the art of merengue dancing, and engaging in hypnosis meditations. Additionally, I have a keen interest in diving deep into anatomy and biomechanics to enhance my gym performance and aid in post-workout recovery.

What are your future goals and aspirations? My future aspirations include owning multiple real estate properties and establishing my own business beyond the field of modeling. Blessed with the freedom to explore diverse opportunities, I am currently navigating different paths to determine the best course to follow. Additionally, a long-held desire of mine involves traveling to third-world countries to volunteer and support children with physical disabilities and those who are undernourished.

Who has been the most influential person in your life and why? While I don't have one singular individual who stands out as the most influential in my life, I have gleaned valuable advice and insights from a diverse array of individuals I've encountered. Engaging in conversations with a myriad of fascinating people has significantly shaped my future outlook and mindset. Even now, I am continually inspired by individuals who have achieved greater success and possess intelligence beyond my own.

What's the most cringe pickup line you've ever got? I'll take cheesy pickup lines over hollering"Hey beautiful or "Hey!!" or "damn".

Would you rather be loved, respected, or admired? I value respect above all else. While being admired may be appealing, it's not a top priority for me. Respect is my utmost priority, as it inherently brings love and admiration along with it.

Are any new projects or events that you're working on and could you tell us a bit about that? I am actively developing my brand and being showcased in other publications which I'm excited about.

If you had to give your followers one piece of advice what would it be? When you prioritize yourself first, everything else will naturally fall into place.

Lastly, where can our readers follow you on social media to stay updated on what you're up to? Twitter: TrulyYoursSE and Instagram @sofia_espositolv.

A RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK

Bugatti's Tourbillion is the ultimate expression in craftsmanship and engineering, carrying on where the Veyron and Chiron left off at over 300mph

Very few will ever experience what it's like to drive the new Bugatti Tourbillion. A slightly larger number of people will ever see one in real life. Most will see it on social media thanks to content created by myriad car spotters. But this exclusivity and ultimate rarity only fuels our excitement and sense of wonder. Even a sense of appreciation that something like this still exists under ever-tightening rules and budgets.

I can't think of another car of the twentieth century that has had bigger shoes to fill than the Tourbillion – successor to the Veyron and Chiron, both of which were the world's fastest production cars. Depending on how you interpret the rules, the Chiron still is...

What's in the name

The Veyron was named after Pierre Veyron, a test driver, engineer and Le Mans race winner at the wheel of a Bugatti in 1939. The Chiron was named after Louis Chiron, who won the 1931 French Grand Prix behind the wheel of a Type 51. For Bugatti's latest model, they broke tradition and instead named it after a high-end watch mechanism to symbolize luxury and enduring craftsmanship.

Tourbillion actually means 'whirlpool' in French and the genius behind its design is that it counterbalances itself against gravity, thus eliminating any inexact timekeeping that may result from the movements of your wrist.

The name Tourbillion was chosen as the perfect encapsulation of this car's character," the company notes. "A completely original creation without compare, it is both complex and beautiful, helping to counteract the effects of gravity on a watch to ensure more consistent time-keeping. And over 200 years later it is still revered as the pinnacle of watchmaking."

Blending Tradition with a New Direction

In 2021 Bugatti underwent a seismic change to its entire operations. It divested itself from the Volkswagen Group (VAG) and majority share went to RIMAC – you may have heard of them as the godfathers of fast electric cars like the Nevera. Porsche still retains over 40%, and has long since held a significant stake in Rimac too, putting together, on paper at least, a marriage made in heaven.

Apart from being the first Bugatti to not have a W16 engine in over two decades (more on that in a bit) , tradition still plays a big part for Matte Rimac who

has over 100 years of Bugatti legacy to protect. He could have easily plugged the Nevera's architecture into the Tourbillion and given it a new metal coat, but instead those signature elements like the Horseshoe grille are displayed proudly and you wouldn't mistake it for anything other than the Chiron's replacement. We can also confidently say of the three generations, the Tourbillion got the lion's share of the looks.

It may share visual cues, but the reality is that the Tourbillion doesn't share a single component with the Chiron which elevates its price, and probably had those in charge of the budget banging their fists on the boardroom table.

Leaner and meaner

There's been a steady ramping up of aggression levels across the three generations with less plumpiness. The Tourbillion still retains those big shoulder lines, accentuated by another Bugatti staple of two-tone paint. The glasshouse has also been reduced. The doors now open upwards and forwards in a motion that is probably the closest association with the Nevera.

The engine is still the jewel in the crown which is why Bugatti has made every effort to make its artwork visible from the outside, with the signature centreline dividing the two cylinder banks in perfect symmetry. Completing the rear styling are two huge aerodynamic tunnels while below it is one of the largest diffusers you'll ever see. It's been designed to be swapped out easily (but probably expensively) if it ever gets damaged because nobody wants to do 300mph with a hole in the diffuser.

The Tourbillion's aerodynamic performance is enhanced by the moveable rear wing which also acts as an airbrake when pointed to its maximum 55-degree angle.

Sweet Sixteen

...and a trio of electric motors. How else would a hypercar be relevant in 2024, and beyond, without some form of electric assistance? Still, it's safe to say that these electric motors don't occupy the headlines and a more of a sideline show than the main attraction.

Similar in some areas, dramatically different in others, the Tourbillion uses a V16 8.3-liter compared to the Chiron's W16, 8.0-liter. Cosworth, the same guys who recently worked on the high-revving Murray-designed T.50, also casted their magic here and the result is 986 horsepower and 664 pound-feet

of torque at 9,000rpm. That's over 2,000rpm higher than the Chiron's rev limit and since when has a high-revving engine led to less smiles?

It's actually bigger than the W16, but weighs just 555lb, making it around 300lb lighter. The crankshaft is about three feet in length and has a cross-plane design because they're known for producing deeper sounds.

Critics will point to the lower output, but that doesn't include the aforementioned electric motors which add another 789 horsepower. Add the engine to the mix, that number swells to 1800hp. The other side of this powertrain's personality means another 30 miles on electricity alone. New packaging benefits position the Tourbillon's eight-speed dual-clutch gearbox behind the engine, leaving the 21.0-kWh battery pack close to the chassis floor, and down the middle for optimal weight distribution. The Tourbillion is expected to tip the scales at a similar weight, perhaps even lighter than the Chiron, because the suspension was redesigned to be lighter and is completely bespoke.

Early figures suggest that it should reach 60mph in 2.0 seconds and 250mph in 25 seconds. Obviously, that depends on the Michelin Pilot Sport 2 tyres finding enough grip. Top speed is claimed

to be 277mph, although Bugatti must be hiding some performance in its pocket because the Chiron's record still stands at 304.77mph. All these performance yardsticks are quicker than the Chiron by a few tenths.

A timeless interior

Normally, discussions around an interior design would devolve to a mentioning the size and number of screens and although Bugatti's roots are French, now with German and Croatian influence, its interior design echoes the Swiss – with particular inspiration drawn from the Tourbillion mechanism.

One quote from Matte Rimac stood out above the others 'nothing dates a car faster than its screen technology.'

Analog systems age far better and are more robust. Although there is a small digital screen it can be retracted out of sight. It reminds us of the intricate, dazzling work of Pagani although perhaps pared back a touch and less garish.
Breaking down the dials, the center one takes care of the revs (the dial goes to 10,000rpm) as well as the speed (all the way to 550km/h / 342mph). Right of it shows how the power is being deployed, whether battery, or the V16, and sitting to the left of the center dial is information for oil temperature and a fuel gauge – the latter likely to move as quickly as the second hand on a Tourbillion watch.

Bugatti plans a modest 250-unit run, with production and deliveries expected to begin in 2026. That leaves you with enough time to save up for its $4.3 million starting price, and add it to a collection that will likely include its forebears in the Veyron and Chiron.

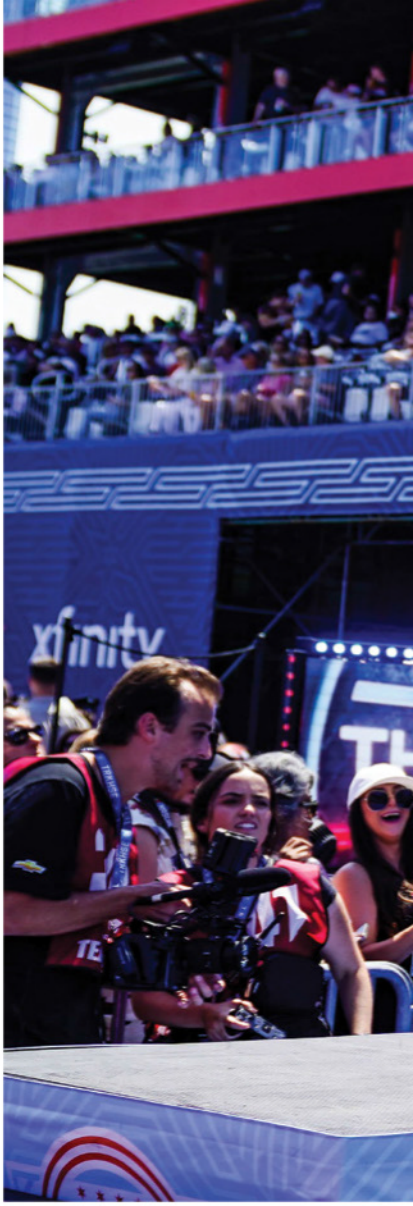
Pawan Dhingara

FUNKAWAY
PARKER RETZLAFF

THE NEED FOR SPEED

Interview with NASCAR's Parker Retzlaff

He may wear glasses and not look like your average "athlete", however, NASCAR Xfinity Series driver Parker Retzlaff has been making waves on the track and giving motivation to others around the world to take up the sport for themselves. From getting into racing to tips for those wanting to go fast, and how his career has helped him land the ladies, we spoke to Parker about it all in this exclusive interview!



How does one become a professional race car driver? This is a tough question. It can go two ways. I feel like a majority, not including myself, come from the background of racing. Most of the time you hear about how their fathers or grandfathers have been in the racing world for many years. For me, I grew up around it but my dad or grandfather never raced. Being from Wisconsin, there was a ton of off-road racing going on. This is the state where the world championship takes place. Every year my parents and I would go. I always showed an interest in it but at the end of the day, it was way too expensive. My dad and I found a more affordable option, mini sprint cars. This is what I started with. From there we were all hooked as a family. Years following I raced Bandoleros, dirt trucks, asphalt trucks, ARCA, and now Xfinity.

At first glance, you don't "look" like the typical driver. How do you use that to your advantage on the track? I can remember my first Xfinity race, it was at Phoenix, a lot of people were questioning who I was and how I got to be in the Xfinity Series. I had qualified 6th for my first-ever Xfinity race out of 38 drivers. Nobody expected it. Even I was in disbelief. To this day a lot of people will come up to me and talk about the time I qualified 6th in my first-ever Xfinity start. When they bring it up it

always brings back a ton of memories. It got me to where I was today. That is a key example of making the most out of every opportunity you get.

Have you ever used your profession to your advantage when it comes to picking up women and dating? I have been with the same girl forever. We actually met through racing. She races up in Connecticut and we had quite a few mutual friends. I played Iracing with someone she knew from the track. We added each other on SnapChat a day before my ARCA race at Gateway which was my second-ever ARCA race. This August, 2024, will be 5 years together.

Have you ever had a date or someone complained about your driving before? My girlfriend complains about my driving on the roads. I am very aggressive, want to get to where I am going quickly, and have 0 patience!

Growing up my parents always told me to slow down. A few months ago I actually got my first ticket. When I called my dad he said, "It's about time!" and "I can't believe it took this long!" Of course, I was not proud to get a speeding ticket, 23 over nonetheless but it was something I had to deal with. My girlfriend was the one who got hers before mine and she is a more cautious driver than me but I nonstop joked with her about it for months on end. So in a way, I guess it was karma and my turn to do the same thing.

Athletes, no matter what profession, sweat and stink. Your car funny enough is sponsored by FunkAway, an odor eliminator. How did this come to be, and would you say you are the best-smelling driver in NASCAR? Before the race, I would say I am one of the best but after a 3-hour race, sweating and driving with all of your gear on, none of us smell good. After every race, I always make sure to spray FunkAway on my suit and helmet.

My sponsor, FunkAway, came to me through a mutual friend. In 2022, we had no plans after my Dover race. We were calling every company known to man

24/7 to try and secure funding. We had some mutual friends who were out together, one of them cracked a joke... "Do you want to sponsor a NASCAR race?" They jumped on it. Our first race with FunkAway was at Nashville Superspeedway. From there we went over to OUR Motorsports and competed at Texas, Vegas, Homestead and Phoenix. Then came the off-season. We all wanted to do more. I wanted to be a full-time Xfinity racer and they 100% supported the idea. This was when we signed with Jordan Anderson Racing for the 2023 season full-time. It felt like a dream come true. Today, 2024, I am with Jordan Anderson Racing for my 2nd full-time Xfinity Series. FunkAway has been my biggest supporter to get me to where I am today. Quite literally I would not be where I am today. I am so thankful for their support and gracious backing behind my racing career!

What is the worst smell you have ever experienced in or around racing? Funny story but not really. This happened last year. Our first ever time racing at the Chicago street course it did nothing but rain like crazy. Everything got soaked. It rained so much that they actually ended up calling our race before it was even finished. Anyway, somehow my stuff did not get properly dried out after that weekend. That following weekend we were in Atlanta, one of the hottest races of the year, and all of my gear had mold on it. Especially my helmet. It stunk so bad that we had to use multiple different FunkAway cans to try and eliminate the odor.

We have to ask, do you like "Funk Music"? Or what are your go-to songs right now? I am not big into "Funk Music ". I really like hype music the most out of all but there is not one genre that I stick to. I have never had the time to go to an actual concert. I think if I ever did, it would change my opinion on what kind of music I listen to. I like country music to an extent but eventually will fall asleep. Tons of other drivers listen to music before the race, I am not one of those. I act like myself but once the helmet goes on, it is game time.

How does one train for a race? What is a day in the life of a driver like? Every Monday there is always a debrief meeting race shop. This is where we talk stuff over with the team on strengths and weaknesses from our race day weekend. We are always looking to get better on everything. At the end of the day, we are a team so our communication has to always be on point.

We also normally have some simulator time for the following race track that we go to. At the sim we can try different setups and changes. The simulator that we use is as close to real life as you can get since we are not allowed to practice in real life. Lastly, we study lots of videos, watch old races, and listen to comments from years prior of how the track changes.

If you weren't driving, what would you be doing? I really have no clue. Driving race cars has been my dream since I was 7 years old. It has consumed the majority of my life.

My best guess, if I was not racing I would probably be taking after my dad. He does drain cleaning and air ducts. Pretty ironic that FunkAway is my sponsor, some of those drains are truly FUNKY! During the weekdays growing up, me and him would go out and do jobs together after school. Many people may find it disgusting but it never bothered me growing up. In fact, I feel it has taught me what to do if a drain gets clogged or to tell when air ducts need to be cleaned.

What are your Top 5 Tips for those who want to pursue a life in racing in some way, shape or form?

1. Make sure you take every opportunity and try to prove yourself.
2. Never give up after one bad weekend.
3. Mistakes happen but it's what you take from those mistakes that will make you a better driver.
4. You and your crew are a team. You are in it together.
5. Racing is a confidence sport. Believe in yourself, your car, and your team!

And finally, besides smelling good forever and winning races, what is your ultimate dream? My dream right now is to win an Xfinity race. My lifelong dream would be to win a cup race or championship. This would be my ultimate dream. At the end of the day, my goal is to be competing for wins every weekend.

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BEYOND BICEPS

Why Vascular Health is the True Measure of Fitness

By Frank Hamre

In a world obsessed with muscle mass and six-pack abs, there's a crucial aspect of fitness that often goes overlooked: vascular health. While bulging biceps and chiseled chests may grab the spotlight, it's the health of your blood vessels that truly determines your overall well-being. In this article, we delve deep into the often-neglected realm of vascular fitness and discover why it's the ultimate gauge of true physical prowess.

Gone are the days when fitness was measured solely by the size of your muscles or the number on the scale. Today, experts recognize that the health of your cardiovascular system is paramount – and for good reason. Your blood vessels are the highways of your body, delivering oxygen and nutrients to every cell and tissue while removing waste and toxins. Without optimal vascular function, even the most sculpted physique is merely a facade.

But what exactly constitutes vascular fitness? It's not just about having clear arteries and normal blood pressure – although those are certainly important factors. True vascular fitness encompasses a range of markers, including endothelial function, arterial flexibility, and microcirculation. These elements determine how efficiently your blood flows throughout your body, influencing everything from your energy levels to your risk of chronic disease.

So, how can you improve your vascular health? It's not as simple as pumping iron or logging miles on the treadmill – though those activities certainly play a role. A comprehensive approach to vascular fitness involves a combination of aerobic exercise, strength training, and lifestyle modifications such as a healthy diet and stress management. By prioritizing activities that promote circulation and vascular integrity, you can enhance your overall health and longevity.

But perhaps the most compelling reason to prioritize vascular health is its impact on your quality of life. After all, what good is a ripped physique if you're sidelined by heart disease or stroke? By shifting our focus from superficial aesthetics to the inner workings of our circulatory system, we can redefine what it means to be truly fit – not just in body, but in mind and spirit as well. So, the next time you hit the gym, remember: beyond the biceps, vascular health is the true measure of fitness.

FIERCE

JULIA TIFFANY

Model @JuliaTiffany

Photographer Jameson Burnett | @jameson.vizualz
MUA @makeupbyolena
PR LSA | @lsapublications @leo.alderman
Location Taken in the Sahara Las Vegas suite before I hosted The FHM /Babes in Toyland Playmakers party downstairs.

We're happy to have you featured. Can you give us a bit of background on your career as a model and where it all started? I popped out of the womb as an actress. After school plays, winning theater festivals, and small roles on the big screen I became a Professional Walker for "The Walking Dead". This led to more body paint and FX modeling jobs for some well-known artists (Face/off). I realized how much I loved telling a story mixing acting with modeling which led me to lingerie and 8 years later here we are.

How do you usually begin your day? After I scroll on my phone, I walk my dogs, and then I either go to the gym or do some kind of peloton class at home (I really enjoy the boxing boot camps). I don't ever eat breakfast or drink coffee.

If you could spend a day doing anything you wanted, what would it be and why? Enjoying the day with Johnny Depp on his yacht in France.

What are your favorite ways to unwind and relax when you're not working or traveling? Enjoying a glass (bottle) of wine and some True Crime. I also really enjoy going to the billiards hall and playing some pool.

Do you have any hidden talent, if so what is it? I am a trained voiceover artist. My voiceover coach is the voice of Jimmy Neutron. I've also been writing since I was young and I have a television series I've been writing for the past few years that I hope to bring to your tv screen soon.

What's the best place you have ever been to in the world? This is such a hard question because my mom is a flight attendant so I've been traveling my entire life. It kind of depends. I would say Cancun has amazing nightlife and gorgeous beaches. Amsterdam has the kindest and most welcoming people and I absolutely loved smoking anywhere I wanted. Italy has extraordinary food and the ambiance in Paris is unlike any other. But there is no place like home.

What are some of your biggest dreams you hope to achieve?

- To retire one day as the voice of a famous cartoon character
- To learn how to drive a yacht, buy one and travel in it
- To sell my screenplay to a streaming service
- To witness my son have a happy and fulfilled life.

3 things that you can't go a day without. Sparkling water, Doggy Kisses, and a joint.

Looking back, what advice would you give to younger yourself? Don't let ANYONE influence your decisions.....not even family. Finish school.Boys are liars.

That said, what advice would you give to all the women out there when it comes to love and relationships? Put yourself first. Make sure you're happy. You can't make anyone else happy unless You're happy and it is so easy to lose your identity when you're in a relationship.

Are there any qualities or traits you find particularly attractive in a partner and what do you value the most? A great sense of humor makes me weak in the knees. I'm pretty goofy and I need someone who can banter back and forth with me and who can understand my sarcastic, dirty sense of humor. I honestly think I should've been a comedian so my man has to keep up. I also value honesty. Once I find out you lied to me, it is extremely hard for me to trust you. I'd rather you be upfront with me, even if it's going to hurt. There is absolutely no reason to lie to me. And If you think there is then...Adios.

Thanks so much for your time, Where can our readers follow you on social to stay up to date on what you're up to? My Instagram is JuliaTiffany, My only fans is DinnerAtTiffanys and my Playboy page is JuliaTiffany. I cook Live in lingerie for my "Dinner at Tiffany's" segment on BOTH pages so make sure to follow and subscribe.

FHM
IT'S GREAT TO BE A MAN

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